JANUARY
3rd
1921
25c

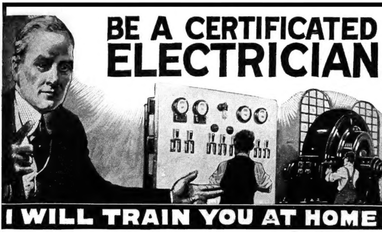
Adventure

PUBLISHED
TWICE A MONTH

William Patterson White
Charles T. Jackson
Barry Scobee
J. Allan Dunn
L. Patrick Greene
Arthur O. Friel
Roger Daniels
Chester L. Saxby
Hugh Pendexter
Gordon Young

☆

BE A CERTIFICATED ELECTRICIAN



I WILL TRAIN YOU AT HOME

Three Vital Facts

1. The demand for ELECTRICAL EXPERTS is greater than in any other profession.
2. Electrical Experts earn $3,000 to $10,000 a year.
3. Advancement for the Electrical Expert is certain, and the opportunities for getting into business for yourself are better than in any other line.

Knowing these three facts the thing for every red-blooded ambitious man to consider is where can he get the best practical training in Electrical work. Not a lot of theoretical stuff—but a real practical training that will make him an Electrical Expert in the shortest possible time.

A Real Training

As chief engineer of the Chicago Engineering Works I know exactly the kind of training a man needs to get the best positions at the highest salaries. Hundreds of my students are now earning $3,000 to $10,000. Many are now successful ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS. Read my students' letters.

Your Success Is Guaranteed

I know what I can do for any wide awake ambitious man, and will absolutely guarantee your SUCCESS or your money returned. No other school will do this for you. Our SHOPS and LABORATORIES are the finest and always open for my students' use.

Fine Electrical Outfit—FREE

I give each student a Splendid Outfit of Electrical Tools, Materials, and Measuring Instruments absolutely FREE. I also supply them with Drawing Outfit, examination paper, and many other things that other schools don't furnish.

Get Started Now—Write Me

I want to send you my splendid Electrical Book and Proof Lessons - both FREE. These cost you nothing and you'll enjoy them. Make the start to-day for a bright future in Electricity. Send in coupon—NOW.

L. L. COOKE, Chief Engineer

Chicago Engineering Works

Dept. 431, 1918 Sunnyside Ave.
CHICAGO, ILL.

USE THIS "FREE OUTFIT" COUPON

Chief
Engineer
COOKE
Dept. 431
1918 Sunnyside Ave.
Chicago, Ill.

Sir: Send at once—fully prepaid and entirely free—complete particulars of your great offer for this month.

Name........................

Address..........................

City.................... State........

Read What My Students Say—

"Have just received my diploma, of which I am very proud.

"I think your course is the most complete I have ever seen. I have received my money's worth many times, and any fellow that turns down your offer is sure going to regret it."—Loran C. Brown, Sebring, Ohio.

"Since I started to study with you a year ago I have been doing electrical work in my spare time, made the price of 2 Courses, and have increased my earning power just 100 per cent."—Samuel Albright, Riverside, Wash.

"During May I made about $85.00 in my spare time. I can hand you the credit, because when I started I knew NOTHING about Electricity."—L. Randell, Ironton, Minn.

"You will be pleased to learn of my promotion to Chief Electrician. It was your course put me where I am. Although only a little over half through your lessons, I have had my wages raised from $75.00 to $275.00 a month, and expect to do better before I am through."—H. E. Wolf, Columbus, Ohio.

"When I enrolled with you I was only able to make $75.00 a month. Today, thanks to your splendid lessons, I am in business for myself, making over $400.00 a month."—A. Schreck, Phoenix, Arizona.

"Electrical men here speak very highly of your course. One—the Fresno Manager of the General Electric Company—says your course is equal to the three years' training course at their Schenectady shops."—E. Linnville, Fresno, Calif.

"I want to speak a good word in regard to your Course and methods. It has helped me wonderfully. I passed a Journeyman's examination with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, and am now carrying a first-class card." —J. R. Overton, Maryville, Tenn.

"When I enrolled—I knew nothing about Electricity. Today I am the highest paid workman for the Massena Light & Power Co."—C. C. Burkhart, Massena, New York.

"You don't know how glad I am that my son has found such a man as you. I only wish other mothers knew of the interest you take in your students—their boys."—Mrs. S. Williams, Huntington Beach, Cal.

"I am still holding that position with the Minneapolis Steel & Machinery Company, secured on your recommendation." —A. Swanson, Minneapolis, Minn.

"In 18 months since I started to study with you I have increased my salary from $6 a day to $4.000 a year."—A. F. Klemz, State Supt. of Const., Miller-York Co., Saginaw, Mich.

"The outfit is wonderful, so much better than I expected, and I must say I am more than pleased with same."—F. X. Droege, Covington, Ky.

"Before I started to study with you I was only able to make $50 every 2 weeks. Now I am making $300 a month, and going up all the time. Your Course has put me where I am."—J. E. Sallinger, Mine Electrician, New River & Pocahontas Con. Coal Co., Layland, W. Va.

"I would not take 1,000 dollars and be without your course. If I did the years ahead would only be like the few that have passed."—H. Swiger, Wallace, West Virginia.

Complete Letters Sent When You Write Me

YOU CAN DO IT

I'll Teach You Piano In Quarter Usual Time

To persons who have not previously heard of my method, this may seem a pretty bold statement. But I will gladly convince you of its accuracy by referring you to any number of my graduates in any part of the world.

There isn't a State in the Union that doesn't contain a score or more skilled players of the piano or organ who obtained their *entire* training from me by *mail*. I have far more students than were ever before taught by one man. Investigate by writing for my 64-page free booklet, "How to Learn Piano or Organ."

My way of teaching piano or organ is *entirely different* from all others. Out of every four hours of study, one hour is spent *entirely away from the keyboard*—learning something about Harmony and The Laws of Music. This is an awful shock to most teachers of the "old school," who still think that learning piano is solely a problem of "finger gymnastics." When you *do* go to the keyboard, you accomplish *twice as much*, because you *understand what you are doing*. Within four lessons I enable you to play an interesting piece not only in the original key, but in all other keys as well.

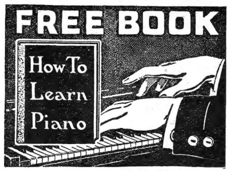
I make use of every possible scientific help—many of which are *entirely unknown* to the average teacher. My patented invention, the COLOROTONE, sweeps away playing difficulties that have troubled students for generations. By its use Transposition—usually a "nightmare" to students—becomes easy and fascinating. With my fifth lesson I introduce another important and exclusive invention, QUINN-DEX. Quinn-Dex is a simple, hand-operated moving picture device which enables you to see, right before your eyes, every movement of my hands at the keyboard. You actually see the fingers move. Instead of having to reproduce your teacher's finger movements from MEMORY—which cannot be always accurate—you have the correct models before you during every minute of practice. The COLOROTONE and QUINN-DEX save you months and years of wasted effort. They can be obtained only from me, and there is nothing else, anywhere, even remotely like them.

DR. QUINN AT HIS PIANO

From the Famous Sketch by Schneider, Exhibited at the St. Louis Exposition.

Men and women who have failed by all other methods have quickly and easily attained success when studying with me. In all *essential* ways you are in closer touch with me than if you were studying by the oral method—yet my lessons cost you only 43 cents each—and they include all the many recent developments in scientific teaching. For the student of moderate means, this method of studying is *far superior* to all others, and even for the wealthiest students there is nothing *better* at *any* price. You may be certain that your progress is at all times in accord with the best musical thought of the present day, *and this makes all the difference in the world.*

My Course is endorsed by distinguished musicians who would not recommend any course but the best. It is for beginners or experienced players, old or young. You advance as rapidly or as slowly as you wish. All necessary music is supplied without extra charge. A diploma is granted. Write to-day, without cost or obligation, for 64-page free booklet, "How to Learn Piano or Organ."



FREE BOOK COUPON

QUINN CONSERVATORY, Studio AA,
598 Columbia Road, Boston, 25, Mass.

Please send me, without cost or obligation, your free booklet, "How to Learn Piano or Organ," and full particulars of your Course and special reduced Tuition offer.

Name……………………………………

Address……………………………………

Marcus Lucius Quinn Conservatory of Music
Studio AA, 598 Columbia Road, Boston, 25, Mass.

ADVENTURE
Jan. 3rd, 1921

Published twice a month by The Ridgway Company at Spring and Macdougal Sts., New York City. Yearly subscription $4.00 in advance; single copy 25 cents. Entered as second-class matter Oct. 1, 1910, at the post-office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879.

Volume 28
Number 1

Free Proof that I Can Raise Your Pay

No matter how much you are earning now, I can show you how to increase it. I have even taken failures and shown them how to make $100—$200, and in one case as high as $2,000 weekly. I am willing to prove this entirely at my risk and expense.

LET'S have a little chat about getting ahead—you and I. My name is Pelton. Lots of people call me "The Man Who Makes Men Rich." I don't deny it. I've done it for thousands of people—lifted them up from poverty to riches.

I'm no genius—far from it. I'm just a plain, everyday, unassuming sort of man. I know what poverty is. I've looked black despair in the eye—had failure stalk me around and hoodoo everything I did. I've known the bitterest kind of want.

But to-day all is different. I have money and all of the things that money will buy. I am rich also in the things that money won't buy—health, happiness and friendship. Few people have more of the blessings of the world than I.

It was a simple thing that jumped me up from poverty to riches. As I've said, I'm no genius. But I had the good fortune to know a genius. One day this man told me a "secret." It had to do with getting ahead and growing rich. He had used it himself with remarkable results. He said that every wealthy man knew this "secret,"—that is why he was rich.

I used the "secret." It surely had a good test. At that time I was flat broke. Worse than that, for I was several thousand dollars in the hole. I had about given up hope when I put the "secret" to work.

At first I couldn't believe my sudden change in fortune. Money actually flowed in on me. I was thrilled with a new sense of power. Things I couldn't do before became as easy for me to do as opening a door. My business boomed and continued to leap ahead at a rate that startled me. Prosperity became my partner. Since that day I've never known what it is to want for money, friendship, happiness, health or any of the good things of life.

That "secret" surely made me rich in every sense of the word.

My sudden rise to riches naturally surprised others. One by one people came to me and asked me how I did it. I told them. And it worked for them as well as it did for me.

Some of the things this "secret" has done for people are astounding. I would hardly believe them if I hadn't seen them with my own eyes. Adding ten, twenty, thirty or forty dollars a week to a man's income is a mere nothing. That's merely playing at it. In one case I took a rank failure and in a few weeks had him earning as high as $2,000.00 a week. Listen to this:

A young man in the East had an article for which there was a nation-wide demand. For twelve years he "puttered around" with it, barely eking out a living. To-day this young man is worh $200,000. He is building a $25,000 home—and paying cash for it. He has three automobiles. His children go to private schools. He goes hunting, fishing, traveling, whenever the mood strikes him. His income is over a thousand dollars a week.

In a little town in New York lives a man who two years ago was pitied by all who knew him. From the time he was 14 he had worked and slaved—and at sixty he was looked upon as a failure. Without work—in debt to his charitable friends, with an invalid son to support, the outlook was pitchy black.

Then he learned the "secret." In two weeks he was in business for himself. In three months his plant was working night and day to fill orders. During 1916 the profits were $20,000. During 1917 the profits ran close to $40,000. And this genial 64-year young man is enjoying pleasures and comforts he little dreamed would ever be his.

I could tell you thousands of similar instances. But there's no need to do this as I'm willing to tell you the "secret" itself. Then you can put it to work and see what it will do for you.

A Few Examples

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

Among over 350,000 users of "Power of Will" are such men as Judge Ben B. Lindsey; Supreme Court Justice Parker; Wu Ting Fang, Ex U. S. Chinese Ambassador; Assistant Postmaster General Britt; Gov. McKelvie of Nebraska; General Manager Christeson of Wells-Fargo Express Co.; E. St. Elmo Lewis, former Vice-Pres. Art Metal Construction Co.; Gov. Ferris of Michigan, and many others of equal prominence.

$300 PROFIT FROM ONE DAY'S READING

"The result from one day's study netted me $300 cash. I think it a great book and would not be without it for ten times the cost."—Col. A. W. Wilke, Roscoe, So. Dakota.

WORTH $15,000 AND MORE

"This book has been worth more than $15,000 to me."—Oscar B. Sheppard.

WOULD BE WORTH $100,000

"If I had only had it when I was 20 years old, I would be worth $100,000 to-day. It is worth a hundred times the price."—S. W. Taylor, The Santa Fe Ry., Milans, Tex.

SALARY JUMPED FROM $150 TO $800

"Since I read 'Power of Will' my salary has jumped from $150 to $800 a month."—J. F. Gibson, San Diego, Cal.

FROM $100 TO $3,000 A MONTH

"One of our boys who read 'Power of Will' before he came over here jumped from $100 a month to $3,000 the first month, and won a $250 prize for the best salesmanship in the state."—Private Leslie A. Still, A. E. F., France.

I don't claim I can make you rich over night. Maybe I can—maybe I can't. Sometimes I have failures—everyone has. But I do claim that I can help 90 out of every 100 people if they will let me.

The point of it all, my friend, is that you are using only about one-tenth of that wonderful brain of yours. That's why you haven't won greater success. Throw the unused nine-tenths of your brain into action and you'll be amazed at the almost instantaneous results.

The Will is the motive power of the brain. Without a highly trained, inflexible will, a man has about as much chance of attaining success in life as a railway engine has of crossing the continent without steam. The biggest ideas have no value without will-power to "put them over." Yet the will, altho heretofore entirely neglected, can be trained into wonderful power like the brain or memory and by the very same method—intelligent exercise and use.

If you held your arm in a sling for two years, it would become powerless to lift a feather, from lack of use. The same is true of the Will—it becomes useless from lack of practice. Because we don't use our Wills—because we continually bow to circumstance—we become unable to assert ourselves. What our wills need is practice.

Develop your will-power and money will flow in on you. Rich opportunities will open up for you. Driving energy you never dreamed you had will manifest itself. You will thrill with a new power—a power that nothing can resist. You'll have an influence over people that you never thought possible. Success—in whatever form you want it—will come as easy as failure came before. And those are only a few of the things the "secret" will do for you. The "secret" is fully explained in the wonderful book, "Power of Will."

How You Can Prove This at My Expense

I know you'll think that I've claimed a lot. Perhaps you think there must be a catch somewhere. But here is my offer. You can easily make thousands—you can't lose a penny.

Send no money—no, not a cent. Merely clip the coupon and mail it to me. By return mail you'll receive not a phamphlet, but the whole "secret" told in this wonderful book "POWER OF WILL."

Keep it five days. Look it over in your home. Apply some of its simple teachings. If it doesn't show you how you can increase your income many times over—just as it has for thousands of others—mail the book back. You will be out nothing.

But if you do feel that "POWER OF WILL" will do for you what it has done for over a quarter of a million others—if you feel as they do that it's the next greatest book to the Bible—send me only $4.00 and you and I'll be square.

If you pass this offer by, I'll be out only the small profit on a four-dollar sale. But you—you may easily be out the difference between what you're making now and an income several times as great. So you see you've a lot—a whole lot—more to lose than I.

Mail the coupon or write a letter now—you may never read this offer again.

PELTON PUBLISHING COMPANY

48-A Wilcox Block, MERIDEN, CONN.

PELTON PUBLISHING COMPANY
48-A Wilcox Block, Meriden, Conn.

You may send me "Power of Will" at your risk. I agree to remit $4.00 or remail the book to you in five days.

Name ....

Address ....

Play the Hawaiian Guitar

Just Like the Hawaiians!

Our method of teaching is so simple, plain and easy that you begin on a piece with your first lesson. In half an hour you can play it! We have reduced the necessary motions you learn to only four—and you acquire these in a few minutes. Then it is only a matter of practice to acquire the weird, fascinating tremolos, staccatos, slurs and other effects that make this instrument so delightful. The Hawaiian Guitar plays any kind of music, both the melody and the accompaniment. Your tuition fee includes a beautiful Hawaiian Guitar, all the necessary picks and steel bar and 52 complete lessons and pieces of music.

Send Coupon NOW
Get Full Particulars FREE

First Hawaiian Conservatory of Music, Inc.
233 Broadway **NEW YORK**

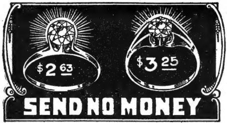
I am interested in the HAWAIIAN GUITAR. Please send complete information, special price offer, etc., etc.

NAME..

ADDRESS ....

TOWN.. A. M.

Write Name and Address Clearly



SEND NO MONEY

If You Can Tell it from a GENUINE DIAMOND Send it back

To prove our blue-white MEXICAN DIAMOND closely resembles a genuine diamond with same DAZZLING RAINBOW FIRE, we will send a selected 1 carat gem in Ladies' Tiffany Style Ring (Cat. price $4.98) for **Half Price to introduce, $2.63,** or in Gents' Heavy Tooth Belcher Ring (Cat. price $6.26) for $3.25. Our finest 12k Gold Filled mountings. GUARANTEED 20 YEARS. **SEND NO MONEY.** Just mail postcard or this ad. State Size. We will mail at once C. O. D. If not pleased return in 2 days for money back less handling charges. Write for **Free** Catalog. **Agents Wanted.**

MEXICAN DIAMOND IMPORTING CO., Dept. AE, Las Cruces, N. Mex.
(Exclusive controllers Mexican Diamonds)

Don't Wear a Truss

BROOKS' APPLIANCE, the modern scientific invention, the wonderful new discovery that relieves rupture will be sent on trial. No obnoxious springs or pads. Has automatic Air Cushions. Binds and draws the broken parts together as you would a broken limb. No salves. No lies. Durable, cheap. **Sent on trial to prove it.** Protected by U. S. patents. Catalogue and measure blanks mailed free. Send name and address today.

C. E. BROOKS, 212D State Street, Marshall, Mich.

Spare time

Does it weigh heavily on your hands? Does it mean idle, profitless hours from supper time to bed time? Here's your chance to gain

Adventure

Without leaving your home town. Without spending a cent. Without previous experience.

Money—

As much as you want. It all depends on how good an adventurer you are. $15 to $50 a week can be yours. Thousands are doing it, why not you?

Write

For full particulars, without obligation, to Manager, Staff Agencies Division, Box 625, Butterick Building, New York.

LEARN WIRELESS

WIRELESS
the
OPPORTUNITY of
TODAY
NATIONAL RADIO INSTITUTE

At Home Quickly and Easily

Interesting and attractive positions—either at sea or on land—with substantial salaries, for men trained as Wireless Operators. Salaries start at $125 a month plus Room and Board, which means a total of $200 or more a month. One of our recent graduates is getting $6,000 a year. Get in line for a big position at a big salary! Let us help you! WIRELESS INSTRUMENTS FREE TO EVERY STUDENT. Write for this FREE book, full of valuable information.

NATIONAL RADIO INSTITUTE
Dept. 417 **Washington, D. C.**

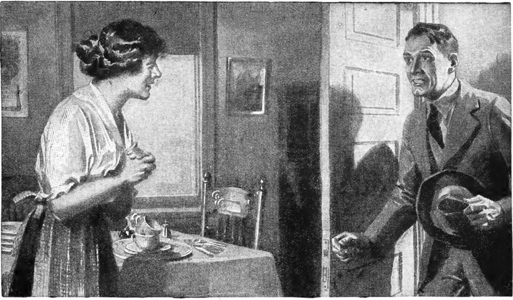
AUTOMOTIVE

Motor Cars, Trucks, Tractors

Trained salesmen make $6,000 to $8,000 a year selling motor cars, trucks and tractors. The Automotive Industry is the second largest industry in the world and Automotive Selling is the best paid and biggest selling field in the world. Good salesmen are in constant demand. It is high-class dignified work. You can qualify for these big-paying positions. For the first time is now offered, at small cost, a lecture course on Automotive Salesmanship. Every phase is completely covered. It thoroughly instructs beginners and greatly helps experienced, ambitious salesmen, salesmanagers and others. Nothing like this course has been prepared before. DECIDE NOW to qualify for the best paying selling business in the world. Send for particulars.

AUTO PUB. CO., 245 West 55th St., New York.

SALESMANSHIP



“$100 a Week, Nell!

Think What That Means To Us!”

“They’ve made me Superintendent—and doubled my salary! Now we can have the comforts and pleasures we’ve dreamed of—our own home, a maid for you, Nell, and no more worrying about the cost of living!

“The president called me in today and told me. He said he picked me for promotion three months ago when he learned I was studying at home with the International Correspondence Schools. Now my chance has come—and thanks to the I.C.S., I’m ready for it!”

Thousands of men now know the joy of happy, prosperous homes because they let the International Correspondence Schools prepare them in spare hours for bigger work and better pay.

Why don’t *you* study some one thing and get ready for a real job, at a salary that will give *your* wife and children the things you would like them to have?

You can *do* it! Pick the position you want in the work you like best and the I. C. S. will prepare you for it right in your own home, in your spare time—you need not lose a day or a dollar from your present occupation.

Yes, you *can* do it! More than two million have done it in the last thirty years. More than 130,000 are doing it right now. Without cost, without obligation, find out how you can join them. Mark and mail this coupon!

TEAR OUT HERE

INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS

BOX 2041-B, SCRANTON, PA.

Explain, without obligating me, how I can qualify for the position, or in the subject, *before* which I mark **X**.

☐ ELECTRICAL ENGINEER
☐ Electric Lighting and Railways
☐ Electric Wiring
☐ Telegraph Engineer
☐ Telephone Work
☐ MECHANICAL ENGINEER
☐ Mechanical Draftsman
☐ Machine Shop Practice
☐ Toolmaker
☐ Gas Engine Operating
☐ CIVIL ENGINEER
☐ Surveying and Mapping
☐ MINE FOREMAN OR ENGINEER
☐ STATIONARY ENGINEER
☐ Marine Engineer
☐ Ship Draftsman
☐ ARCHITECT
☐ Contractor and Builder
☐ Architectural Draftsman
☐ Concrete Builder
☐ Structural Engineer
☐ PLUMBING AND HEATING
☐ Sheet Metal Worker
☐ Textile Overseer or Supt.
☐ CHEMIST
☐ Mathematics
☐ SALESMANSHIP
☐ ADVERTISING
☐ Window Trimmer
☐ Show Card Writer
☐ Sign Painter
☐ Railroad Trainman
☐ ILLUSTRATING
☐ Cartooning
☐ BUSINESS MANAGEMENT
☐ Private Secretary
☐ BOOKKEEPER
☐ Stenographer and Typist
☐ Cert. Public Accountant
☐ TRAFFIC MANAGER
☐ Railway Accountant
☐ Commercial Law
☐ GOOD ENGLISH
☐ Teacher
☐ Common School Subjects
☐ CIVIL SERVICE
☐ Railway Mail Clerk
☐ AUTOMOBILE OPERATING
☐ Auto Repairing
☐ Navigation
☐ AGRICULTURE
☐ Poultry Raising
☐ Spanish
☐ French
☐ Italian

Name____________________

Present Occupation____________________

Street and No.____________________

City____________________State__________

Canadians may send this coupon to International Correspondence Schools, Montreal, Canada 7-25-19

For Holiday Gifts
Loftis Lady Louise
Loftis Octagon Ring
DIAMONDS WIN HEARTS
Most Popular Diamond Rings

DIAMONDS ON CREDIT WATCHES ON CREDIT

We offer exceptional values in Diamond Rings, Solitaires and Clusters, latest popular plain and fancy engraved mountings. The Diamonds are magnificent gems, set in White, Green or Yellow Solid Gold. Featured in Catalog. Special at

$85, $125, $150, $200, $250 and up

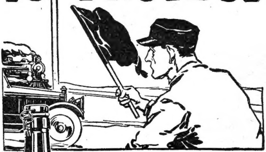
CREDIT TERMS on purchases of $5 or over, one-fifth down, balance in eight equal amounts, payable monthly.

Send For Holiday Catalog

The easiest, most convenient way to make handsome, worth-while presents is to send for our Catalog, make selections in the quiet of your own home, and **have as many articles as you wish charged in one account.** We prepay shipping charges. Satisfaction guaranteed or money promptly refunded. **Send for Catalog Today. Liberty Bonds Accepted.**

LOFTIS BROS. & Co., National Credit Jewelers
Dept. H 224 **100 to 108 N. State St., Chicago, Ill.**
(Established 1858) **STORES IN LEADING CITIES**

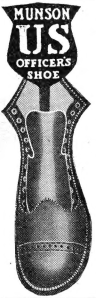
TO PROTECT



Relief from irritating coughs and colds and sore scratchy throats is only an arm's length away when Piso's is kept on your shelf. Buy Piso's today, then you will have it always handy as a protection. Good for young and old. It contains no opiate.

35c at your druggist's

PISO'S
for Coughs & Colds



A SPECIAL
Factory
Cut-Price
U. S. Officer's Shoes

Hand sewed, first grade factory, cut-down price. Direct to you at only **$6.85** Made of the best Water-proof Mahogany calf leather. If these shoes are not just as we say, send them back. You do not lose a cent. Retail price of this shoe is $10.00. Built for work and dress at the same time. If you are sending money order or check do not include postage. Pay only for shoes. We pay postage.

U. S. Army Marching Shoes

First grade factory, cut-down price. Direct to you at only $5.15. Retail price of these shoes is $8 00. Made of the best elkskin waterproof leather.

U. S. NATIONAL MUNSON ARMY SHOE CO., Inc.
Dept. A-190 **Westfield, Mass.**

AFTER 40?

A PLEASINGLY written booklet for those near or past middle life. It concerns a simple drugless treatment that cannot interfere with daily work or doctor's care. It has delighted thousands, is prescribed by hundreds of physicians and indorsed by intelligent laymen all over the world. Not a book about infectious diseases but wholesome truth. Just say: Send me, free of all charge,

"PROSTATOLOGY"

If depressed in spirit; if backache, sciatica or tender feet annoy you; if nerves are gone, if bladder weakness and disturbed slumber undermine your health, you will bless this book. Do it before you forget where you saw this notice.

ELECTROTHERMAL COMPANY, 61-B Kirk Bldg., Steubenville, O.

NO MONEY DOWN **2 CREDIT ALL $2 A MONTH**

Elgin, Waltham, Howard, Illinois

or any watch you want. Easy Payments and 30 days Free Trial. Send for Big

FREE CATALOG

112 pages wonderful values, diamonds, watches, rings, jewelry, up-to-date designs. Buy the **Ware Way,** you will never miss the money. **Get posted, write today.**

WARE DEALS SQUARE

ALFRED WARE CO., Dept. 292, St. Louis, Mo.

PARKER'S HAIR BALSAM
Removes Dandruff—Stops Hair Falling
Restores Color and
Beauty to Gray and Faded Hair
60c. and $1.00 at druggists.
Hiscox Chem. Works. Patchogue, N. Y.

HINDERCORNS Removes Corns, Callouses, etc., stops all pain, ensures comfort to the feet, makes walking easy. 15 cents by mail or at Druggists. Hiscox Chemical Works, Patchogue, N. Y.

CLASSIFIED

Agents and Help Wanted

Railway Traffic Inspectors earn from $110 to $200 per month and expenses. Travel if desired. Unlimited advancement. No age limit. We train you. Positions furnished under guarantee. Write for Booklet CM 93. Standard Business Training Institute, Buffalo, N. Y.

Stop Daily Grind, start silvering Mirrors, Auto headlights, Tableware, etc. Plans free. Clarence Sprinkle, Department 49, Marion, Indiana.

LADIES TO SEW AT HOME for a large Phila. firm, good money, steady work; no canvassing; send stamped envelope for prices paid. Universal Co., Dept. 15, Walnut St., Phila., Pa.

DETECTIVES EARN BIG MONEY. Great demand everywhere. Travel. Fascinating work. Experience unnecessary. We train you. Particulars free. Write, American Detective System, 1968 B'way, N.Y.

Detectives make big money. Be one. We show you how by home study. Particulars free. Write American School of Criminology, Dept. A, Detroit, Mich.

OUR PROTECTED ARTICLE exclusively owned and controlled by us clears upward of $40.00 per day for salesmen. Most essential. Government created demand. Large territories to salesmen able to handle crews. Side-line or full-time. If you cannot sell this specialty you will fail selling life preservers on a sinking ship. Definite co-operation. Jerome Laadt, Pres., 8 South Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill.

Agents make big money because sales may be made in every home. Our modern aids to home sanitation have an appeal that cannot be resisted. A brush, mop or duster for every need. Liberal commissions and good territory. North Ridge Brush Company, 139 Clark St., Freeport, Ill.

Big Money and Fast Sales. Every owner buys Gold Initials for his auto. You charge $1.50; make $1.35. Ten orders daily easy. Write for particulars and free samples. American Monogram Co., Dept. 85, East Orange, N. J.

Agents—Large Manufacturer wants agents to sell hosiery, underwear, shirts, dresses, skirts, waists, shoes, clothing, etc. Write for free samples, Madison Mills, 503 Broadway, New York.

Fun and Entertainment

Tricks, Puzzles, Jokes, Magical Goods, Plays, Wigs, Stage Supplies and Sensational Escapes. Send stamp for large catalogue. Oaks Magical Co., Dept 519, Oshkosh, Wis.

Photo Finishing

Mail us 20c with any size film for development and six velvet prints. Or send six negatives any size and 20c for six prints. Or send 40c for one 8 x 10 mounted enlargement. Prompt, perfect service. **Roanoke Photo Finishing Co.,** 278 Bell Ave., Roanoke, Va.

Stories, Photoplays, etc.

Write photoplays: $25—$300 paid anyone for suitable ideas. Experience unnecessary; complete outline Free. Producers League, 394, St. Louis, Mo.

$1200 a Year writing photoplays. Turn your ideas into dollars. We teach only sure method. Get Free Book, valuable information and prize offer. Chicago Photoplay Coll., Box 278 A 12o' Chicago.

SEEK adventure and wealth —at home and in your spare time.

Write for full particulars to

Manager, Staff Agencies Division
Box 624, Butterick Building, N. Y.

Are You A Reject?

Look in the glass. See if what you see there is a full-fledged man, or a piece of damaged goods—a reject of society—nerves gone, vitality sapped, energy lacking, ambition lost—a weakened, trembling, hopeless, joyless mortal who feels that life is not worth living, and the world looks dark and gloomy.

The guilty man shudders at the spectacle he sees in the mirror. You know when you are face to face with yourself what has made you what you are, if you are of the guilty ones.

Don't be a Half-Baked Misfit

You can brace up and be a real fellow—a wholesome-looking, handsome, healthy chap—a man any employer would be glad to have around—a man every man and woman will instinctively take to right off. Yes, you can do it—if you will listen to a little common sense as it is taught by a man who made himself the best physical specimen in the world, then devoted himself to the rehabilitation of other men and women and so succeeded that thousands now acclaim him the wonder worker of the age.

STRONGFORT
The Perfect Man

Strongfortism Will Put You On Your Feet

Strongfortism works miracles in men, yet it is easily adopted that, without interfering with any ordinary occupation, you can have health and vitality and vigor restored. If you are a sufferer from Nervous Disorders, Bad Habits, Excesses, Weaknesses, Catarrh, Indigestion, Rheumatism—or any other dread affliction, I urge you to learn what I can do for you. So wide-reaching is my system that I can remedy almost any physical fault by purely natural means **without the use of drugs or medicines.** It's great—you'll admit it as soon as you know anything about it.

My Free Book Tells All About It

I know I can confer upon you tremendous benefits—I know you'll thank me as other thousands have—that's why I want to give you an insight into my wonderful method by sending you my highly interesting and valuable book, **"Promotion and Conservation of Health, Strength and Mental Energy."**

Don't lose a minute. Send a 10c. piece for postage, etc., to my address. Tell me your ailment. I will reply promptly—you'll devour the truths found in my book and you will see at once that a new era of life is within your grasp.

LIONEL STRONGFORT

Physical and Health Specialist

Dept. 105 Newark, N. J.

FREE CONSULTATION COUPON

Absolutely Confidential

Mr. Lionel Strongfort—Dept. 105, Newark, N. J., Personal.

Please send me your Book, **"Promotion and Conservation of Health, Strength and Mental Energy,"** for postage of which I enclose a 10c. piece (one dime). Send me special information on subjects marked X below, without in any way obligating me.

...Colds
...Catarrh
...Hay Fever
...Asthma
...Obesity
...Headache
...Thinness
...Rupture
...Lumbago
...Neuritis
...Neuralgia
...Flat Chest
...Deformity (describe)
...Insomnia
...Short Wind
...Flat Feet
...Stomach Disorders
...Constipation
...Biliousness
...Torpid Liver
...Indigestion
...Nervousness
...Poor Memory
...Rheumatism
...Gastritis
...Heart Weakness
...Poor Circulation
...Despondency
...Skin Disorders
...Falling Hair
...Weak Eyes
...Round Shoulders
...Muscular Development

Here mention other subjects not listed above....................

....

NAME ....

AGE.........OCCUPATION ....

STREET ....

CITY......................STATE ....

In the Far North—

a Woman—

young, clever, unafraid—outwits a gang of desperate gold miners. How this lovely girl takes the fight into her own hands and wins single-handed for the sake of a fortune in gold and the man she loves, makes a ripping story that will grip any man, or woman, who loves to be thrilled by the virile people of the far North's great out-of-doors.

Read "The Trencher," by David Churchill, and the dozen other absorbing stories and serials waiting for you in the *December*

Everybody's Magazine

January 3d
1921
Vol.28 No.1

Published Twice a Month by THE RIDGWAY COMPANY
J. H. GANNON, President C. H. HOLMES, Secretary and Treasurer

Spring and Macdougal Streets - - New York City
6, Henrietta St., Covent Garden, London, W. C., England

Entered as Second-Class Matter, October 1, 1910, at the Post-Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879.
ARTHUR SULLIVANT HOFFMAN, Editor

Yearly Subscription, $4.00 in advance
Single Copy, Twenty-Five Cents

Foreign postage, $2.00 additional. Canadian Postage, 60 cents.

Trade-Mark Registered; Copyright, 1920, by The Ridgway Company in the United States and Great Britain.
The editor assumes no risk for manuscripts and illustrations submitted to this magazine, but he will use all due care while they are in his hands.

Contents for First January, 1921, Issue

No Man's Island . . . . **J. Allan Dunn** 3
Cannibals and pearls.

The Wind* . . . . **Barry Scobee** 54
In the clutch of dead men.

With the Aid of the Spirits . . . . **L. Patrick Greene** 63
Wise men leave native graves alone in Africa.

Trapped . . . . **Gordon Young** 70
A crime in the night.

The Heart of the Range *A Five-Part Story Part I* . . . **William Patterson White** 79
Racey bucks a gang of gunmen.

"Brown Bess" *vs.* "Old Kaintuck" *A Scrap of Firearms Lore* **Lewis Appleton Barker** 104

Southward . . . . **Chester L. Saxby** 106
Fire at sea. An "*Arnie*" story.

Half-Pint Smith . . . . **Charles T. Jackson** 118
A Southern colonel side-steps.

**Occasionally one of our stories will be called an "Off-the-Trail" story, a warning that it is in some way different from the usual magazine stories, perhaps a little different, perhaps a good deal. It may violate a canon of literature or a custom of magazines, or merely be different from the type usually found in this magazine. The difference may lie in unusual theme, material, ending, or manner of telling. No question of relative merit is involved.*

(*Continued on next page*)

(Continued from preceding page)

Concerning Pikers *Poem* . . . . John D. A. Weaver 129

A Scout for Virginia *A Four-Part Story* *Conclusion* . . Hugh Pendexter 131
An Indian war in Colonial days.

In His Prime . . . . Roger Daniels 151
A Great Lakes captain fights the ice.

The Vulture . . . . Arthur O. Friel 156
Death-dealer of the Amazon.

The Prodigal Son *Poem* . . . . Ira South 172

The Camp-Fire A free-to-all meeting-place for readers, writers and adventurers 173

Looking Ahead for Democracy 180

A Birds-Eye View of Central America . . . . . Edgar Young 181

Various Practical Services Free to Any Reader 185

Ask Adventure 186

Firearms, Past and Present 187

Fishing in North America 187

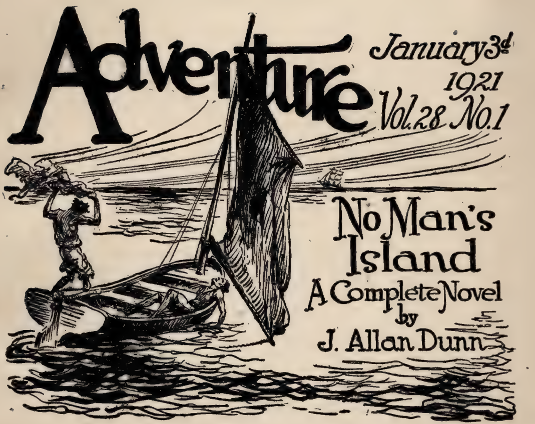
Lost Trails 191

The Trail Ahead 192

Headings . . . . T. S. Tousey

Cover Design . . . . Mayo Goldsmith

Statement of the ownership, management, circulation, etc., required by the Act of Congress of August 24, 1912, of *Adventure*, published semi-monthly at New York, N. Y., for October 1, 1920. State of New York. County of New York. ss. Before me a Notary Public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared James F. Birmingham, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the Business Manager of the *Adventure*, and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management (and if a daily paper, the circulation), etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 443, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit: 1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: Publisher: The Ridgway Company, a corporation, Spring and Macdougal Streets, New York City. Editor, Arthur Sullivant Hoffman, 223 Spring Street, New York City. Managing Editor, Arthur Sullivant Hoffman, 223 Spring Street, New York City. Business Manager, James F. Birmingham, 223 Spring Street, New York City. 2. That the owners are: (Give names and addresses of individual owners, or, if a corporation, give its name and the names and addresses of stockholders owning or holding 1 per cent. or more of the total amount of stock.) *Owner:* The Ridgway Company, a corporation, Spring and Macdougal Streets, New York City. Stockholders: Federal Publishing Company, a corporation, 15 Exchange Place, Jersey City, N. J. Stockholder of Federal Publishing Company: The Butterick Company, a corporation, 223 Spring Street, New York City. Stockholders of Butterick Company: George B. Black, 812 Lincoln Avenue, Mendota, Illinois. S. R. Latshaw, 223 Spring Street, New York City. W. H. Gelshenen, 100 William Street, New York City. Estate of H. F. Morse, care of Garfield National Bank, New York City. Laura J. O'Loughlin, 156 Ridge Street, Glens Falls, N. Y. Mrs. Arethusa Pond, San Remo Hotel, New York City. Erman J. Ridgway, 280 Broadway, New York City. Augustus Van Wyck, 149 Broadway, New York City. R. A. Van Wyck, 149 Broadway, New York City. Marie A. Wilder, 223 Spring Street, New York City. Ben F. Wilder, 223 Spring Street, New York City. George W. Wilder, 223 Spring Street, New York City. 3. *That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent. or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: (If there are none, so state.)* None. 4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him. 5. That the average number of copies of each issue of this publication sold or distributed, through the mails or otherwise, to paid subscribers during the six months preceding the date shown above is. (This information is required from daily publications only.) James F. Birmingham, Business Manager. Sworn to and subscribed before me this 30th day of September, 1920. Cecil L. Wahl, Notary Public, Kings County. Certificate filed New York County. (*My commission expires March* 30, 1922.) (Seal.) Form 3526.—Ed. 1916.



Adventure
January 3d 1921
Vol. 28 No. 1

No Man's Island

A Complete Novel

by

J. Allan Dunn

Author of "The War Cloth," "The Long Trail," etc.

TO MOST of us an aquarium seems an unlikely place for a diver to choose in which to spend a holiday. Sam Manning thought differently. And the aquarium at Kapiolani Park at Waikiki is different. It is an out-of-doors institution and one may smoke and watch the strange shapes and vivid colors of the occupants of the tanks in a combination of pleasure and comfort that was most acceptable to Manning.

Romance and poetry to the contrary, your deep-sea diver does not take in much of the sub-surface life while he's at work. There are too many things to look out for: life-line, air-pipe, signals, currents, to say nothing of the actual work in hand. Then too the helmet-glasses get misty in spite of the vinegar film used to keep them clear. Like as not, the water is roily, and it is ten to one the diver is working in a place that more nearly resembles a neglected back-yard than a sea-garden aglow with color.

But there was a streak of romance, and not a narrow one, in the composition of Manning. And, when he could do so at leisure, he liked to see through the glass of the tanks the tropical, underwater beauties that he missed at Pearl Harbor, where he had just completed a contract at the Naval station.

Striped and splotched trigger-fish in blue and gold, or black and scarlet; strange, darting shapes of silver, azure and flaming red, spotted eels, sulking squid, gorgeous anemones, like orchids of the sea, vivid marine growths, spiny sea-urchins, nightmare crabs, live coral, live sponges; a fascinating display ever shifting in kaleidoscopic review. Manning refilled his pipe, seated in the scattering shade of date-palms opposite the tank labeled *Hippocampidæ*, which Manning translated as sea-horses.

He played chess once in a while, and the striking resemblance of the mailed fishes, with their prehensile tails and elongated snouts, to the knights of his favorite diversion always fascinated him. Just now his attention was divided between them and a man whom he had observed, more or less closely, for the past hour.

The stranger was a riddle to Manning and

Copyright, 1920, by The Ridgway Company in the United States and Great Britain. All rights reserved.

the diver liked to solve such riddles. To begin with, he was dressed in a slop suit of serge that was shapeless as a collection of gunny sacks but could not hide the erect figure, the broad, square shoulders and narrowing hips of the man. He was painfully thin, but Manning sensed muscles and well-coordinated strength and action. Clad like a common sailor, evidently of the sea, Manning was sure that the man belonged aft, that he was one who gave orders rather than obeyed them.

He was pretty certain that the man was both hungry and broke. He knew that the stranger had glanced at him more than once with a look that was a part of the puzzle. It had held a hint of entreaty. Only a hint, tempered by pride that showed in the tilt of the well-shaped jaw, the carriage of the well-shaped head. It was a tentative hail to one who might or might not answer in kind.

In the look had been a suggestion of recognition. And this Manning reciprocated to a certain extent. He could not place the man and he prided himself upon his recollection of faces. Their former meeting must have been under different circumstances, he decided. The chap had been through a sickness of some kind, he fancied. Clothes and additional poundage made a vast difference.

"He's a Yank," decided Manning, "but he's no stranger in these latitudes. And he's got a good nose."

Manning was a crank on noses. He liked the way the stranger, if he was a stranger, wore his, jutting out in an aquiline aggressiveness from between gray eyes; curving down, lean and well sculptured, ending above a close-clipped mustache that accented a firm mouth.

"About thirty," he placed his age. Manning had just topped forty. The other was close to six feet, perhaps a trifle over the fathom. Manning was five-feet-ten, solid, vigorous.

The man regarded the fishes apathetically, hands in his pockets, frowning, opposite the *Hippocampidæ*. The tank might have been empty for any real attention he gave it though he was looking straight at the glass front that reflected his lean visage to Manning, who once again thought he caught that speculative glance.

"He's no panhandler," the diver decided. "I like him. And he looks as if he needed a lift, if it's only a friendly word. Rum place for him to come if he's feeling the way he looks."

Generous always, with the generosity happily leavened by inherent caution and a habit of going about things methodically, Manning got up and strolled over nearer to the sea-horses, ranging up alongside the other.

"Funny little beggars, ain't they?" he said. "Don't seem like fishes, somehow."

"Ran into a whole herd of 'em one time," he went on as the other did not answer. "Herded in the cabin of a wreck I was goin' through in twelve fathom of water. I'll bet there was four or five hundred of 'em."

The man turned swiftly, eagerness in his eyes, his thin body tensing.

"You're a diver?"

The gray eyes were ablaze with hope, boring at Manning. There was the note in his voice of a marooned sailor who, almost hopeless, suddenly sees a ship's boat coming round the point and hails it, with a certain incredulity. It was a deep-sea voice with a ring to it that confirmed Manning's impression that the man was used to issuing orders.

"That's been my job for twenty-odd years," he answered. "Name of Manning. Sam Manning."

"Manning—Manning?"

The brows of the other knitted, lines of effort showing above them in a struggle for recollection. Then his face cleared.

"You were at Tahiti in—let me see—1913. Working on the hull of the *Esperance?*"

"Correct."

Manning still cudgeled his brains in vain for the connecting links of memory.

"I used to watch you from the wharf. Don't know that I met you. But you may have heard of me. I was there selling pearls. My name's Hooper, Tom Hooper of Huapai."

Now his voice held a note of entreaty. It was almost as if he had had reason lately to doubt his own identity, or had had it questioned, Manning thought shrewdly.

"It seems to fit in somewhere," he said slowly. "But I can't just place it. Pearls? And you've got the handle of captain, I'm thinking."

Hooper nodded a trifle impatiently.

"I don't look much like Hooper of Huapai just now," he said. "I met one man this morning who ought to know me and he said he didn't. I am not sure whether he lied or not. But Tom Hooper of Huapai is fairly well known in Tahiti. Or was. 'Lucky' Hooper they called me. I handled more pearls than the rest of them. My own. Tahiti is the clearing-house for pearls, you know."

"Yes; I've heard so. I've never dived for 'em. Never had anything to do with 'em. But——"

Manning's face suddenly lightened.

"Did you own the three-masted schooner in the harbor that time? The only three-master there. A beauty—called the—the——"

"*Moanamanu.* The *Ocean Bird.*"

"Yes, sir. The *Moanamanu.* I remember that schooner. I've always had a notion to own a schooner myself. I've put in so much of my life under the surface I like to sail on top by contrast for the joy of it. Sail—not steam. A beauty, that schooner. She's not with you?"

"She's lying in ten fathoms inside a double reef, half-way between the Galapagos and the Marquesas."

"Tough luck. You ran her ashore?"

"I didn't. But I was in her."

The man who had named himself Hooper, Lucky Hooper of Huapai, had been subjecting Manning to close inspection, a searching inquisition that began and ended eyes to eyes. And Manning did not resent it. Inwardly he chuckled. The apparent derelict had assumed the act of investigation, conducting it as a natural privilege. He liked the rising of Hooper above clothes and obvious circumstance.

"You said you were a diver?" queried Hooper after a quick glance to see if any one was in earshot, or so Manning interpreted it. "Deep-sea, I take it."

"Anything down to twenty fathoms."

"Are you working?"

"Just got through. Haven't made up my mind whether I'll sign up again or not. I'm a bit stale after a steady spell. Expect to lay off for a week or so, anyway."

Hooper nodded.

"Got your own outfit, I suppose?"

"Two suits, one with oxygen tank. Four assistants. Why?"

He countered sharply with the question. A grim twist of an approving smile showed on Hooper's face.

"You may imagine I'm not rolling in wealth just now," he said. "But there's a reason. I think I can explain it satisfactorily to you." His voice got a little bitter but changed again. "I know the kind of job you did at Tahiti," he went on. "I know your reputation. You've only got a hazy recollection of me. I am not in a position to offer credentials. And I am in a hurry. To offset what I know of you, and you don't know of me, I'll give you a share in my secret. It's a business proposition. I need a partner. I need a diver. Have you got any money, Manning?"

SUCH a conversation, overheard, might have seemed incongruous. The wrong man appeared to be putting a question of that kind. But it did not seem out of the way to Manning. Odd bits of memory were piecing themselves together about Hooper of Huapai. And he did not doubt that this was the man. He was quite certain the chap was neither crook nor adventurer.

He had met many of them in his calling and invariably there had been something about them that gave them away. They had been too specious, too overdressed for their rôles, one way or the other. This chap was straight, in his opinion, and he had taken some time that morning to make it up. Once fixed, Manning was ready to back it.

"I might get hold of some," he said. "Why? Why a diver? Sunken treasure?"

"Yes. Sounds fishy, I suppose. Man told me so this morning the minute I broached it. Said Honolulu was fed up on those sorts of yarns. He meant the Coco Island expedition. The old scallawag that put across that deal let in a bunch of Honolulu men. I've been told a good many things in the last forty-eight hours that I couldn't resent openly. I look like a beachcomber, I'll admit. It's sunken treasure. Pearls. Inside the hold of the *Moanamanu.* And it's a strange sort of yarn, with only my word to prove it. I was discharged from the Seaman's Home two days ago with a dollar and this suit of slops. But I've got to take in some one. You look like a godsend, doubly, because you're a diver. There's a double reason, to my mind, for haste, though you may not look at it in that way. But I can offer you an inducement, if you take any stock in what I'm saying.

"There's a third of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars in it, Manning, for your share, if you'll put up for a craft of some sort, outfit, grub and crew. The diving part of it's easy. The rest isn't. There are risks."

Manning looked at a sea-horse twined about a stalk of seaweed.

"Suppose you come back with me on the car to Honolulu," he said. "And talk it over. I've got rooms there where we can go over the thing at length. We'll have supper together and go into it afterward. I'm hungry."

Something leaped into Hooper's eyes at the word "supper." Hunger is a hard thing to control. But his voice was even.

"Suits me," he said. "What have we got to go by? Have you got any charts there of the Southern Pacific?"

"That's my business. Yes, I've got a lot of them." He glanced at his watch. "We can just catch a car," he said. "Come along."

There were two or three soldiers on the car, part of the island garrison. Manning saw Hooper regarding them interestedly.

"Making quite a military and Naval base out of the Islands," he remarked casually. "Big work at Pearl Harbor. With a general eye to the Japanese, I fancy. They're swarming here. Eight of 'em on this car. But I hope we don't have any more trouble for a while. Got a chance for real preparedness, now. Good thing the war's over."

"Were you in it?"

The inquiry was not casual. Manning looked at Hooper with some surprize. The tone was bitter; there was a flash in his eyes.

"I was under it," Manning answered. "I did what they set me at. It didn't take me across. Kept me busy at the Navy yards. How about you?"

"I was out of it," said Hooper, his voice bitter. "But it wasn't my fault. And now the war's over, or as good as over, —— it."

The repressed feeling in his words, ending in the clipped oath, gave Manning food for thought. It made him the keener to hear Hooper's story. But he was not going to talk about it on the car, if the other had seemed willing. And Hooper relapsed into a broody silence.

II

SAM MANNING, master diver, had cozy quarters in a narrow, short and twisty lane that runs between Beretania and King Streets. Three of his assistants were quartered elsewhere between contracts. The fourth, Fong, a Chinaman of placid countenance and uncertain age, acted as Manning's cook and houseboy.

Fong was a man of parts. He had been with Manning for eight years after the diver had rescued him from a nasty bit of trouble at Singapore. For which he believed Fong, with reason, grateful. In many ways he was invaluable. He could repair a diving-suit as deftly as he could scramble eggs or make a bed. Manning trusted him at the air-pump. Fong had even gone down successfully with the suit that had the oxygen gas-tank attachment.

After supper, while Manning and Hooper smoked, Fong clattered with the dishes, then poked his head in at the door.

"Me go along Chinatown now," he said. "You wan' something mo'?"

"You'll bunk here tonight, Hooper? Fong, fix up a bed. Got plenty of hot water?"

"That all fix," said Fong with a grin. He had an uncanny way of forestalling things but Manning wondered a little. "I *sabe* him stop," Fong went on. "I fix um bed, put out pajamas, fix um wateh fo' bath. All time I *sabe* Cap'n Hoopeh. Plenty too much he skinny now, but I *sabe* him along that time Tahiti. *Sabe* him ship. T'lee masts. Schooneh."

His grin widened at the look of astonishment on both their faces. Manning knew the capacity of Fong's memory. Hooper narrowed his eyes and then his face cleared.

"You knew my cook, Qui Ling?"

"Sure. Qui Ling *sabe* me. Plenty. Where Qui Ling now?"

A shadow darkened Hooper's face.

"I don't know, Fong. I wish I did. I hope he's safe."

"Huh! Qui Ling he plenty *sabe* to take care of Qui Ling. He win fo'ty dollar from me that time along Tahiti. Goo' night."

"There's an endorsement," said Manning as the door closed.

"Out of the sky."

"Good enough for me," rejoined Manning. "I'm glad it happened, Hooper

Not that I doubted you but for your own sake."

"I'm glad myself. I've got a queer yarn to spin. Where are those charts?"

Manning produced the roll and Hooper selected one of them. He flattened it on the table Fong had cleared, weighting it down with books, and picked up a pencil, poising it for a minute and then bringing it down with a light swoop that left a dot on the map in a wide space of ocean.

"There it is," he said. "Due north of Easter Island, close to the line. One hundred and nine-twenty, east longitude, three-seventeen south. I won't swear to the exact reckoning, but it's close enough, and it's the only landfall within thirteen hundred miles, north, south, east or west. I got at the figures with some difficulty. But they'll serve."

"All right," said Manning, his eyes on the tiny speck. "Go ahead, Hooper."

"I am going to cut it as short as possible," said Hooper. "It's all past history. If you are interested when I get through I'll enlarge on details.

"Here is Huapai." He used the pencil again to indicate the position. "Lies between the Paumotus and the Tubuai Archipelago. Belongs to neither. The chief I bought it from owed no sovereignty to France. It was my headquarters. I went in for pearls, hunting virgin lagoons, looking up half-born atolls, where there is no soil on the reef as yet with the coral awash. They are the richest. I was a pearl prospector and I made a study of the game. Both of finding and selling.

"I had been holding ever since the war started, waiting for it to end and prices to go up. But I forgot about the pearls after I read about Belgium. All my news came by way of Tahiti and I got it in chunks. I thought America would have to get into the scrap. I knew I would, sooner or later. The *Lusitania* settled it. I started for San Francisco in the *Moanamanu* on a four-thousand-mile trip, as a steamer would make it. I took my pearls along. I didn't know just what I was going to do except to offer my services as sailing-master.

"I had a vague idea of buying or building a fast chaser for submarines with my pearl sales. I thought they would have their U-boats in the Pacific before long. I took along my supercargo, Thompson, who was as eager to get into it as I was, Neilssen, first mate of the schooner, Scandinavian and neutral, 'Pulu, the second mate, Tahitian, and my full crew of Tahiti boys. I figured to send them all back under 'Pulu from San Francisco, either in the schooner or by steamer.

"We barely got half-way. The wind failed between the trades, as usual, but we had worked up to about two hundred miles south and west of Clipperton Island when the German raider came tearing out of the eye of the sun and chucked a shell across our bows. It was heave to or sink. We flew the American flag and you'd have thought us small game for them but we suited their purpose; all was fair to them in war, and they took us.

"I wasn't overpolite to them. They couldn't understand why I had nothing in the hull and only a little trade stuff aboard and I told them plainly that I was on my way up to the U. S. A. to join in the scrap. I wasn't even politic. I was boiling over at the time. The raider sent an *oberleutnant* aboard by the name of Steiner and I insisted on pretending his name was Schweiner. Which didn't help matters.

"He told me America would never get into the war, unless it was on the side of Germany. He told me the vessels in the Pacific trade were getting a bit shy of raiders and that they were going to use the *Moanamanu* for a decoy. They shipped off 'Pulu, all the native boys and Qui Ling, my cook, in two of my boats to get to land as best they could. Let them take grub and water and let me give them their reckoning and a compass. 'Pulu is a good man and I hope they made it. They were right in the equatorial counter-current and that helped them. Neilssen they took aboard the raider.

"Thompson wasn't backward about saying how he felt about things and Steiner, after he had signaled the raider, told us we two were too eager to get into the fighting to be given a seat in the boats. We might get through. So we were to be kept on the schooner because they were a bit crowded on the raider. That was a fast steamer taken from some South American line, German owned. I wouldn't wonder if it had been built with the purpose in mind. Steiner brought a few men aboard and they tried to make me and Thompson help navigate. When we wouldn't they stowed us in the trade-room.

"They fitted up a wireless on the schooner. The raider would stay below the horizon and the schooner would sail along, sending out S. O. S. signals and flying a flag of distress. When a ship would answer, giving position and coming up, the raider would get ready. And Thompson and I would see the whole thing through the ports.

"It worked well. They didn't get my pearls. I stowed them in a belt the minute they fired the shell at me and, when I knew we were to be kept aboard and how they were going to use the schooner, I hid them in a safe place before they thought to search me. If I couldn't have them myself I wasn't going to make them a present of a quarter of a million dollars' worth of pearls.

"NEVER mind the details of what they did. The war's over. They played their game too long. It couldn't last forever. Landed or picked-up boats' crews gave the details and an Australian battle-cruiser came scooting up over the horizon one afternoon under forced draft, flinging steel. There was a nasty sea running; it was working up to a gale, but it would have done your heart good to see that shooting. The raider was making a running fight of it and both of them came up fast toward us in the schooner where Thompson and I had our eyes glued to the glass of the ports, yelling at every hit. I imagine the raider made all of twenty-two knots but the cruiser was on top of her with thirty, with bigger guns and longer range.

"It was like boys throwing rocks at a can in a mill-pond, with the raider the can, and mighty accurate throwing. Lead-colored sea, leaden clouds over the lowering sun, the lead-colored cruiser coming up hand over hand, spewing fire and steel, and the raider limping along over the angry sea, going down a mass of smoke and flame, stern first.

"Then they turned their attention to us. I don't suppose they knew we were aboard. That was part of the fortune of war. I'll say this for Steiner. He knew how to handle my schooner. It was getting dark; wind and sea were heavy; we were a hard mark to hit and, though we could only guess at what they were doing on deck, I know he shortened canvas and reduced the target while keeping all sail she could stand in that gale.

"Squalls were breaking and Steiner sailed right into the heart of one, clawing into it, curtained off from the cruiser. It must have blotted us right out, but the cruiser kept after us and one shell got our mainmast, grooving half its thickness away.

"We fled through that night like a booby with a broken wing before a hurricane. The mainmast went by the board and we could hear them trampling the deck and cutting the mast away where it banged against the side. A gale is always worst to those below. It seemed to me the hardest I have ever known. Every hour that wind strengthened. We couldn't keep our feet, and slid about the floor in the lurch and lunge of the schooner. They had taken all the furnishings out of the trade-room but the shelves, a small table and a couple of chairs, but we had a rare time dodging those in the dark, with a flash of phosphorus whenever a wave surged along over the ports. The *Moanamanu* was flung from surge to surge like a chip in a millrace. Helm and sail useless. I've an idea we were under bare poles, with maybe a rag of headsail.

"We lost the cruiser, inevitably. I reckon it was about two in the morning when we struck. I'm combining what I learned later with what I knew at the time, Manning. Somewhere about two in the morning we hit the outer reef of the island Steiner named *Schwarzklippen*—Black Cliffs. It was a thousand to one shot that we ever struck it though currents may have helped swing us to it. It has a double reef. There are two entrances, not opposite each other, and we didn't find either of them in that welter of storm.

"We hurdled that first barrier without striking and we crashed across the inner reef with the coral ripping out the lower strakes and leaving us hung up by one jag of rock in her stern, bows down and in the lagoon, wind and wave still battering at us.

"Even that gale could not do much to that twice-belted lagoon. The spume was flying like wet snow in a blizzard and the wind lashed at the sheltered water but, compared to the turmoil outside, it was a millpond. Steiner got off two boats. One splintered into toothpicks when it was launched.

"They may have forgotten us. But they

left us in the traderoom, locked up. We tore the shelves down and used the table and chairs for clubs and rams with the water rising fast to our waists on the slanting floor. Once the schooner lurched and we went down, striking out in that trap, believing it was all over.

"But we smashed the door down and scraped through the panels, scrambling on deck and going overside just as a big wave, all streaky with green fire, came thundering over the outer reef, shattered, gathered itself, came on and spent its strength on the stern of the old *Moanamanu*, sending it to the bottom in ten fathoms, well inside the lagoon, my pearls inside of her.

"Thompson and I made a little beach in a bit of a cove that bottomed a wrinkle in an obsidian cliff. Black sand, we found it, when the dawn came. Thompson had his scalp torn somehow and I was badly bruised. But we were safe for the time and we found some mussels to chew. No water, no fire. We were glad to lie in the sun and nurse ourselves for a bit.

"We didn't know then if the Germans had got ashore or not. But, while we were talking things over, a whale-boat passed us with Steiner in the stern sheets and the men rowing the German man-of-war stroke, choppy and hard. They saw us but paid no attention. They were out looking for stuff from the wreck. Presently they came back, loaded up, and went by us as if we had been a couple of penguins. In an hour or so they returned and picked us up.

"Schwarzklippen is made up of a hollow crater with a narrow promontory leading to a cone. That cone is covered with bush and palms. The inner walls of the crater, sloping to the lagoon, the same, with two or three streams cascading down all the time. On the slope facing the sea the wall is terraced, partly by nature, partly by man, and paved with great blocks a fathom long.

"On the lower terrace there are great images of gray lava with crowns of red tufa on their heads, all the way from four feet to forty on their pedestals, staring out to sea. The same sort of images they have on Easter Island. Put there by the same prehistoric race, I imagine. The natives on the island are a tribe of Melanesians under a chief named Tiburi. They have only been there for about five generations and they know nothing about the origin of the statues. They only worship them.

"Behind the statues there are caves running away back and communicating with caves on the beach below them that are filled with water, even at ebb tide. Steiner made his camp on the terrace. Thompson and I were allowed to build a grass house on the beach. They kept the whale-boat in one of the lower caves, with the oars and mast taken up to the camp when they were not used.

"Thompson and I were allowed to do all the work we could stagger under. We fished for them and gathered fruit and did kitchen chores. We were prisoners to them, who were also prisoners of the sea. I don't know that they treated us overbadly though they weren't overconsiderate.

"The natives came around in canoes that first afternoon and some of them clambered down trails on the crater slopes. They tried to make a demonstration and got the worst of it. Steiner had managed to get arms ashore and some ammunition. Later he made friends with them, in a way. They thought he and his men were gods. They had a different idea about us until we convinced 'em to the contrary.

"Steiner showed Tiburi a few tricks and fixed up some sort of a pact that lasted until they began to get familiar with the women and carried off some of the younger ones. Then Tiburi sulked and went off to the cone. He was still afraid of the guns. Some of the natives stuck with Steiner, those who didn't get along with Tiburi, for one reason and another.

"They showed Steiner and his crowd how to make *kawa* and white alcohol from the root of the *ti* plant. They began to spend most of their time drinking and singing and Steiner's authority weakened. Discipline got slack and Tiburi attacked. But they beat him off. The promontory is a regular knife-edge and Steiner didn't dare tackle it to clean them up.

"They made us rig a flagstaff for them on top of the cliff and the women made a flag of bark paper and colored it red, white and black. It was flying day by day for a possible ship. We hauled up wood for a signal-fire but there was small chance of using it. Steiner had his sextant and saved a chronometer and worked out the position, as I gave it to you. I fancy he was accurate. I got it out of one of the men when he was drunk. It looked hopeless enough. The island is uncharted and likely to be."

"But they had their boat," said Manning. "Why didn't they provision up and get away?"

"The boat wouldn't hold more than sixteen and there were twenty-three of them," said Hooper. "They talked about it but none of them would consent to stay and let the rest go. Afraid what Tiburi would do to them. They'd have gone into the ovens, and they knew it. Steiner suggested drawing lots but they wouldn't hear to it. And there was no hardwood on the island to build a ship with. Nothing but brush and palms and pithwood trees.

"THEY fished up a spar or so from the schooner, with odds and ends of line and tarpaulin and canvas, but they couldn't lift the hull. I used to look at it when we were fishing in the lagoon or out on the inner reef. The knowledge my pearls were there, safe, kept me going, kept up my resolution to get away. Two of the men watched down on the beach each night, armed, both to prevent our stealing the boat or letting the natives get it.

"Our clothes wore out and our shoes. We went native fashion and Thompson and I got covered with yaws and coral scratches. They kept us working as long as we could stand and any of them thought of something for us to do. We had twenty-three masters to serve.

"I meant to steal the whale-boat and make for the Marquesas and Thompson was game. The Galapagos were out of the question with the prevailing winds and the south equatorial current against us. It seemed a crazy scheme for two half-starved men to tackle with scant chance of provisioning—seventeen hundred miles in an open boat. But we were half-crazy, I reckon.

"We made a couple of paddles and a mast and hid them. We braided a big mat sail from *pandanus*, working in the dark when they thought we were asleep. I stole bits of rope for rigging and spliced them. We dried fish and Thompson stole two calabashes from the natives for water. At the last we gathered a lot of young coconuts to supplement them.

"The night we got away it was moonless and still. The crowd was howling out songs on the terrace until midnight, when it died down. We sneaked up on our guards. They were careless by this time and figured we hadn't any spirit left. Never dreamed of us tackling the open boat, I reckon. We strong-armed them, tied them up and gagged them, and we got clear.

"There was a wind outside the reef and by morning we were well away. Maybe they sent canoes after us but we never saw them. I won't tell you what we went through. Don't recollect a quarter of it. We didn't make the Marquesas. A Peruvian bark picked us up on the Callao-Honolulu run, half-mummies, half-maniacs. They brought us to Hilo, half-dead when we got there. Later they shipped us to Honolulu to the Sailors' Home after the bark had left.

"All the data they had was we had been picked up at sea in a whale-boat, which they hadn't brought along. Thompson is still in bad shape. He didn't have as much surplus to lose as I did. I saw him this morning. He's coming round. I told you they dismissed me the day before yesterday.

"Of course I found out the war had ended while we were on Schwarzklippen but I didn't realize just what that meant. I had dreamed of getting a cruiser to go down there, or a destroyer, and seeing Steiner and his crowd rounded up. But—the war is over.

"I saw the shipping commissioner here yesterday. A man with the blood and eyes of a fish. He didn't believe me.

"'It's a good yarn, my man,' he says. 'Pity you haven't any proof of it.'

"'We haven't signed peace with Germany,' I told him. 'There are twenty-three Germans waiting to be interned and punished for raiding.'

"'They may be there and they may be not,' he said. 'You say the island is uncharted. It's a good place for them. They're interned all right. Good morning. If you want to ship I can put you in the way of a berth.'

"I went to see the commandant of the Naval yard and I didn't get past the sentry at the gate."

"Sending down after them wouldn't get you back your pearls," said Manning. "Even if they took you with them you couldn't expect them to provide a diver."

"I realize that. But what about 'Polu and my Kanakas? What about the rest of the crews they sent off in boats? The war is over but they kept me out of it, ——

them! And they still stand between me and the pearls."

"Not to mention Tiburi," put in Manning.

"Those are the risks I told you of. I made one more trial. This morning. There is a man here named Butler. He is a factor. Supplies the plantations with everything they need. And he has other big interests. I met him in Tahiti. Put him up at the club and entertained him. If I ever came to Honolulu he was going to reciprocate. You know the usual thing.

"When I got in to him by sending in my name I saw he put me down for a fake. Twenty-five pounds lost and these clothes robbed me of any resemblance to Hooper of Huapai. He told me frankly he didn't believe I was the same man. To him I was just a beach-comber. I didn't give anything away beyond the fact that I could make it worth his while to outfit me to an island that wasn't charted. I didn't even mention the German end of it.

"He cut me short.

" 'If it's a mysterious island with buried treasure, or a stranded galleon, or a wonderful pearl lagoon,' he said, 'I'm not biting.'

"And then he mentioned the Cocos Island fake. He started to put his hand in his pocket but he didn't take it out. When I began to eye him I fancy he thought for the first time I might be Hooper of Huapai after all, but I was down and out and he was not dealing with derelicts."

"You didn't mention the position of the island to any one?"

"I didn't get a chance. You are the only one who knows the whole yarn, Manning. It's up to you. It's wild enough but it's true, every word of it."

Manning stretched out his hand to the other above the map.

"I believe it," he said. "What do you want to do?"

III

FONG looked in upon the conference of two, his moon face at the full, clear shining with the information he divulged that he had won "slixty dolla at Chinese lottely." Manning looked at the clock.

It was a quarter after three. For hours they had talked and planned, Hooper going over his narrative to the smallest details at the diver's request. As Fong entered Hooper was telling where the pearls were hidden.

"They had locked Thompson and me in the traderoom after the crew got in the boats and started. Steiner went to the raider for further orders concerning us, I suppose; perchance to confirm his own plan of keeping Thompson and me aboard the schooner. They hadn't searched us as yet but I was taking no chances of their overlooking that. And I got busy, with Thompson.

"There was tobacco on the traderoom shelves, package stuff in leadfoil, and we stripped a lot of that off and put the tobacco in an empty tin. There were crackers in waxed paper inside their cartons and we took the paper and left the crackers. One of my best-bet trading-gifts had been rubber hot-water bottles. There is a lot of toothache and bellyache in the islands and once I had introduced a chief to the comfort of a hot-water bag, they were all crazy for them. There were two or three of these along.

"I made up the pearls in long slim packages that would go down the neck of the bag and I wrapped them, first in waxed paper and then in leadfoil. I screwed down the metal stopper hard and fast and Thompson sealed it up with sounding-wax while I got his kit of tools and went to work on the floor.

"The hull ran under the traderoom, which was amidships. There was a hatch used mostly for ventilation and I lifted this. It was framed for the width of the traderoom floor, and the space between that and the hull ceiling, where it had been furred down between the beams. That was the risky part, for I was afraid some one would rubber through the skylight at us. Thompson kept a lookout and they didn't think of it.

"So I carefully pried out one side of the frame and knocked out the furring till I could reach in to a transverse beam. Thompson, while he watched, took his oilskin that hung in the room and ripped the seams. He wrapped up the rubber bag in the back and then pulled the two sleeves over that, making a package of it. I muffled my hammer-head in my handkerchief and spiked that package to the transverse beam, replaced the frame and chucked the rest of the oilskin out of the port. Then my empty belt. Ten minutes later Steiner came in with two men and went through us and the traderoom. They took everything of value we had, including all papers. They took the stores away. Steiner lifted the hatch and peered into the hold. They fastened the ports and then the skylight and went away again.

"The pearls are safe, Manning. Those transverse beams won't rot, even under water, for fifty years. They are selected oak. The rubber might rot a bit but it will hang together in the oilskin package and the foil and wax paper will preserve the pearls. Even if they dull a trifle, we can bring back the full luster by contact with a healthy body or, at the worst, they can be skinned. And their price is going up all the time.

"The upper deck blew up a bit under air-pressure when she went down but the traderoom floor is in place. They are safe and waiting for us."

"Good!"

Manning picked up a sheet of paper on which he had made some memoranda and read it over.

"I'll attend to the money end of it first thing in the morning," he said. "Or, I should say, later this morning. While you see Thompson and refit yourself a bit. Then we'll go after the ship, the stores and the crew."

"It isn't going to be easy to find ship or men, I'm afraid," said Hooper. "But we may have luck. You, Fong and your three men will be practically passengers. I'll try and land a mate to share watch and work with me on the navigation end. Eight sailormen, if we can scare up that many, will be enough. With Thompson, that brings the crew to sixteen. I'd like to get a few more men who would be good in a scrap. There's Tiburi and there are Steiner and his crowd. They don't know the war's over and they may show fight. They would probably try to capture us and take over our ship. They wouldn't be apt to let us dive peaceably. Steiner is smart enough to figure that we were after something worth while."

"You said there were twenty-three of them," said Manning. "Half of them armed."

"Seven rifles and five automatics in the bunch. Steiner has two of the pistols himself."

Hooper began to laugh, silently at first, then in a hearty peal.

"What's the joke?" asked Manning.

"I'm thinking of Steiner, interned or marooned, whichever you please, knowing nothing of what has happened. He may figure the war is over by this time but he'll figure it his way. That Germany owns the earth and is putting a fence around it. I'm laughing at the thought of his face when the news sinks in. Manning, I'm going to get hold of a bunch of newspapers, back numbers. I'll pick the ones that'll rub it in and I'll see he gets them, first thing after we arrive. It may stop a nasty fight. They may *kamerad* it. Though I doubt it. But I want to watch Steiner reading those papers. It'll be funny. Now let's turn in."

They were both down-town at eight o'clock, Hooper visiting his sick supercargo, whose convalescence took an immediate upward trend at the news, and then rehabilitating himself at the Fort Street stores with money advanced by Manning. When the latter met him, close to noon, he saw a different Hooper in the tall, lean man, straight as a plumb-line, striding briskly in a suit of stiff pongee silk and a Panama. He was still the sailor but now he was eminently the commander.

"Hooper of Huapai, all right," commented Manning to himself. "I'll warrant Butler would have listened to him if he had gone to him in those duds. And the sentry would have passed him. Their loss is my gain."

"What luck?" Hooper hailed him.

"Men are scarce but you'll be better able to handle that than I can. But I doubt if we'll be able to pick our crew. I cabled my bank in San Francisco. The money will be here by noon. And I've got word of a schooner. Of course I'm no judge of what will suit us but it seems the only one available, if we can charter it. I have let slip a hint that we are on the track of a guano island. I thought it might be as well not to be too secret. Questions are bound to be asked. We can be mysterious about it and let it appear that we are trying to cover up the leak."

"Good!" said Hooper. "Tell me about the schooner."

"It's the *Mary L.* Was a pleasure craft. Well fitted. About ninety tons. Belonged to a man who was killed in the war. His widow has no use for it. One or two have spoken about buying it for island yachting, but it is too big for most of them. It has an auxiliary engine and a wireless."

"Fine. We don't need the wireless but we do the engine. Talk price?"

"I'm to see the owner this afternoon. But perhaps you'll do that."

"Not me. You do the negotiations. I'll look over the *Mary L.* Sounds pretty good. We evidently can't afford to be fussy."

The *Mary L.* suited Hooper. She was pretty luxuriously fitted up aft but she was roomy and she had good lines for speed.

"If they'll let us put up a temporary partition in the main cabin to give us some privacy aft," he told Manning, "she'll suit first rate if they don't want a fortune for the charter."

"They want three thousand dollars for six months," answered Manning. "They won't take less money or shorten the time of the charter. And I shall have to put up a bond for seven thousand more in case we don't bring her back."

Hooper whistled.

"The lady is some financier," he said. "Not that the charter price is so much but she seems business-like."

"She talked with her business adviser over the phone before she'd give me an answer. Her brother-in-law. I can manage the bond easily by putting up some California real estate as security. I talked with the man myself. Who do you suppose it is?"

"Who?"

"Your friend Butler."

Hooper whistled again.

"There's an element of humor in that," he said. "More than one element. I suppose he doesn't know I'm in on the deal. But he may guess, and he's bound to find out. The main joke is that Butler owns a fertilizer-mill; he supplies the plantations with fertilizer and if he gets wind of the guano yarn you started, he'll be wild. Wouldn't wonder if he tried to horn in, after all."

"The joke is on him, at all events," said Manning. "Then I'll get in touch with him and we'll start cabling about the security. We may have to wait till the deeds arrive on the next steamer."

"That's all right. The schooner has got to go on the marine railroad. She's foul. It will take several days to outfit and get the crew together. I'll start Thompson on the provisioning end in a couple of days. He's well enough now to make out lists. See if you can get permission to start cleaning the schooner right away. They can't lose on that. If the charter money is put up they ought not to kick. And I'll scout for men."

MEN came slowly though they offered big wages. Two Hooper practically shanghaied from a ship in the harbor. Others dribbled in. Few of them could have been described as able seamen but Hooper saw promise enough in them for him to sign them. Sometimes a good man showed after an indifferent one had been taken, but the partners decided that an extra man or so would do no harm.

They were a mixed-pickle lot, the sailors, American, English, Finn, Swede, Dutch, negro and Kanakas. Fong supplied an engineer for the kicker engine that was capable of eight knots and meant much in crossing windless patches of sea on both sides of the equator, and bucking currents. The engineer was also Chinese, a man who had run into tong trouble and was glad to get away. His name was Ling and Fong guaranteed him, which was enough for Manning, who knew a good deal about engines himself.

But, with the bond provided for, the *Mary L* off the marine railroad, outfitted, ready to start, they were still short of their complement. They had almost decided to sail short-handed when the man named Edwards appeared upon the scene. Hooper and Manning were aboard the schooner, now moored to the lading-wharf. Thompson was supervising stowage and the mate that Hooper had turned up was having the standing rigging overhauled.

This mate, Andersen, had had a row with his skipper and he was a lush when he could get hold of liquor. But the *Mary L* was to be a prohibition ship and the man was a good sailor who could handle men and work out a reckoning.

The partners stood in the bows talking when Edwards boarded, spoke to Andersen and then made his way forward, cap in hand, deferential, capable-looking. He addressed himself to Hooper, who was now in skipper's serge, brass-buttoned, peak-capped.

"I understand you are looking for men, sir?" he began.

"Well?" Manning surveyed the applicant approvingly, and Hooper seemed to endorse his attitude. "What capacity?"

"Steward, for myself, sir. With willingness to make myself generally useful. I can take my trick at the wheel, I can handle that wireless for you, I can wait on table and I don't mind helping out in the galley."

"Why are you out of a berth?"

"I've been trying it ashore, sir. I have been head *luna* on a plantation, that is a head foreman of the bosses of the Japanese cane-gangs. It don't suit me. I can give plenty of references, sir. I was head steward on the *Moana*, one time. And I can turn up a few men for you. I have understood" —he lowered his voice— "that you needed them for some sort of guard-duty. I can get you four good men, *lunas* who have been under me."

It was plain he had heard the guano rumor that was current and thought that guards might be left on the island to hold off other comers. The idea struck the partners favorably. The steward was a frank-looking chap, glib, but that was not out of the way in his profession, neatly dressed. They had not thought of a steward but Fong would have his work cut out in the galley. The four *lunas* provided an inducement.

"When can you turn up these men?" asked Hooper. "And what wages do they want?"

"I'll bring them down tomorrow, sir. They'll be off duty. They're fair sick of handling Japs. I fancy your wages will suit."

"And what's your name?"

"Edwards. Williams Edwards."

The upshot of it was that the five were engaged and the complement completed. Twenty-one all told.

The start had been originally scheduled for the early morning flood but a delay in important stores threatened to put it off until the afternoon. Hooper fumed silently while Thompson went up-town to find out the trouble. Everything was shipshape aboard the *Mary L.* There was a stiff breeze blowing outside the harbor when the halt came. Hooper paced the wharf impatiently with Manning.

"It's the dynamite," he said. "I've half a mind to sail without it but it's apt to come in uncommonly useful in more ways than one. I'm not sure about the opening in the inner reef, for one thing. We may have to blast it. But this delay's bad for discipline; looks as if we had slipped a cog in our arrangements. We can hardly get it now unless Thompson jimmies his way into the store. He might do that. Tommy's a handy lad when he gets going. But he'll have to have it down here inside of an hour or we lose the tide. And we can't have the crew loafing. Andersen hasn't got the initiative of a drowning cat."

He went aboard and Manning heard him issuing orders, to which the crew jumped with feverish energy, polishing brass and coiling down sheets and halyards anew. It was a few minutes after six o'clock. No stores or warehouses would open for almost two hours. They would lose the tide. Yet he held a faint hope in Thompson's ability to deliver. The supercargo had gone off at boiling-point.

A car came down the water-front and braked at the wharfhead. Out of it stepped Butler, the factor, and Manning stared at him in amazement to see him out at such an hour, evidently with business on the *Mary L.* For a moment he wondered if anything had turned up against them. Butler was not the sort of gentleman to turn out at dawn merely to say good-by to the men who had chartered his sister-in-law's schooner yacht. He might have begun to change his mind about Hooper, but Manning did not think Butler the sort to make an apology.

The object of the visit flashed in his mind suddenly. Butler had heard about the guano. He either wanted to get into partnership at the last moment, or, more likely, get an option on their supposed prospect. Manning chuckled silently as Butler approached him with an evident pose of trying to appear as if an early-morning trip to the water-front was his usual appetizer. Hooper had gone below.

"Good morning. Going out on this tide? I happened to hear that you were expected to clear this morning. I see you have left the wireless?" added Butler, looking up to where the delicate aerials stretched between the fore and main.

"Yes. It was specified in the contract that nothing was to be dismantled, if you remember," said Manning dryly.

"Was it? I just glanced through it. Well, it doesn't interfere. Wanted to wish you good luck."

"Good of you to turn out for that."

Manning did not bother to cover up the sarcasm he felt. With the deal closed, he had scant use for the factor, remembering how he had treated Hooper. And just then Hooper came on deck and to the gangplank, staring at Butler with cold eyes but not halting his stride toward Manning.

"My partner, Captain Hooper, Mr. Butler. Captain Thomas Hooper of Huapai."

Hooper nodded curtly but Butler was too clever a business man to show confusion.

"I met Captain Hooper some days ago," he said, "and I have met him before. But I didn't recognize him and I told him so rather bluntly. You can't blame me, Hooper," he went on with a show of frankness that if it was insincere, was admirably acted. "I'm sorry, but you looked like anything but the man I met at Tahiti. If there is anything I can do now?"

"I don't think so," returned Hooper. "Thank you just the same. I did look like a derelict. In a way, I was." The two measured glances.

"Look here, you two," said Butler. "I understand you're after guano. You've tried to keep it dark, naturally, but I picked it up. If you land what you're after come and see me. I'll talk business with you and I'll see if I can't treat you better this time, Hooper. I can make it an object. If you want capital to develop, or will sell outright, give me the first chance. I'm interested in fertilizer two ways: making it and selling it. We need the urates, oxalates and phosphates in the stuff. Bring me samples and an idea of the depth of the deposits and maybe I can make my peace with you for the interview we had the other morning. I'm sorry for that."

Manning left the talking to Hooper. It was his affair. There was no hint of a twinkle in Hooper's eyes as he answered.

"If we find anything good in that line I'll come to see you, Butler," he said.

"Fine. Nothing else I can do for you?"

"I think not." A figure came hurrying down the wharf. It was Thompson, his face scarlet with mortification and anger.

"Nothing doing," he exclaimed. "The stuff's there, marked and ready, but it got left over last night. Found the watchman but he wouldn't loosen. Butler and Company have got a fine system, I don't think."

"Coming from Butler's was it, Thompson?"

"Yes. Only place in town we could get the stuff."

"Well, this is Mr. Butler." There was a twinkle in Hooper's eyes now. "We're held up on this tide by some boxes your warehouse failed to deliver, Mr. Butler. Wonder if you could help us out?" He looked toward the car. "They are neither big nor heavy."

"Of course," said the factor promptly. "Let your man come up with me and point them out. I'll bring them down myself. Glad to oblige."

He turned to Manning as Thompson went off with Butler.

"I'll bet you an even hundred Butler doesn't come down with the dynamite," he offered.

Manning laughed and shook his head.

"He may not even risk his car. But I think he'll do that much. He seems to want that guano badly. And he'll imagine dynamite will be used for blasting to determine the depths of deposit. I wish he had to hang by his feet till we showed him the samples."

"You don't like him?"

"No. He's a cutthroat in business."

"There are others."

IN FIFTEEN minutes the car, which had gone off at high speed, came back gingerly on to the wharf, Thompson alone in the tonneau with the boxes of explosive.

"Butler had an appointment up-town," he said. There was a trace of a grin on the face of Butler's driver.

"Hustle them aboard, Tommy. We'll make the tide after all."

Edwards had been standing by the rail. He touched his steward's cap as Hooper and Manning went aboard.

"How soon will you have breakfast, sir?" he asked. He had already served them hot coffee.

"Soon as we clear the bell-buoy. Make it half an hour."

"Very good, sir."

"Capable man, that," Hooper said to Manning.

"Yes. Gets on well with the crew. Got a vein of good humor that's catching. But Fong don't like him."

"No? Too nosey about the galley perhaps. What's Fong's verdict?"

"Too —— slick."

They laughed as they watched the careful stowage of the dynamite.

"The men are going to wonder about that," Manning went on. "Are you going to let them stick to the guano idea?"

"Might as well for the present. All ready, Tommy? All right, Mr. Andersen."

Ordered bustle took place. The spring cables were cast off, the canvas hoisted and the *Mary L.*, heeling to the wind a little, started to slide down-channel with the breeze aft, gathering way, sailing past the channel lighthouse with a fine burst of speed. The keeper waved them a friendly greeting.

"She can walk," said Hooper. "Good lines to her. Easy entry and a sweet run. But I'm glad she's got an engine aboard, for all that."

Once about the bell-buoy the partners went down to breakfast. The partition that had been put up in the overlarge main cabin gave them privacy. There was a door in it through which Edwards served their meal from the 'midships galley. Andersen, who ate at their table, had the deck.

"The course to Schwarzklippen is almost due southeast," said Hooper. "I've set it sou'east by east to clear Kauna Point; that's the southwest cape on Hawaii. Once round the Bib Island and we'll start on our best point of sailing, a long, long reach with a short leg now and then to fetch up leeway. And we'll go kiting. The *Mary L.*'ll do better than twelve."

He spoke with enthusiasm and Manning shared it. They were off at last and all obstacles seemed cleared until they reached the island. The little turn with Butler had furnished a happy touch. Each had an after stateroom to himself. The spare room was occupied in Manning's quarters by his diving-suits, which he had to overhaul, and which he kept under his own eyes when at sea.

The rest of his apparatus was stowed forward. Hooper had the rifles and automatic pistols with their ammunition stowed in his spare berth and under it. The crew's quarters were a bit cramped but the weather was fair and they would spend most of their time on deck. The one problem that seemed to vex Hooper was to find occupation for the men who had shipped as guards. They were a roughish lot but they seemed fit.

"I don't like idleness. It brews too much loose talk," he said. "Your men are different, Manning, but those chaps are practically passengers. I'll have to keep them busy. One thing will be target practise. I want to see how they can shoot. We may be able to pacify Tiburi; the news of the papers I brought along may change the attitude of Steiner, but it is as well to be prepared."

He said this while Edwards was in the galley. Ultimately they would have to mention the pearls, as a valuable package belonging to Hooper that was to be salved from a wreck. It seemed likely the men might anticipate trouble with natives on the supposed guano island. There had been talk of it already and neither Hooper nor Manning had contradicted it. The ex-*lunas* did not seem afraid of the prospect.

"You said you fancied that you were the first white men who had touched on the island," said Manning.

"Pretty sure of it."

"Then I'd surely be the first diver?"

"Yes. Why?"

"I'm not quite ready to tell you. But I've got a scheme browsing round inside my head," said Manning. "Something in connection with Tiburi."

Hooper nodded. He was getting used to Manning's slow but sure methods.

"Coming on deck?" he asked as he pushed back his coffee-cup; and they went up together.

The northeast trade blew strong and steady and they sailed fast all day. At nightfall Molokai was well behind. Abeam of them were Lanai and Kahoolawe with the loom of Maui's ten-thousand-foot dead crater back of them. Manning and Hooper paced the afterdeck together, the latter in charge of the deck until midnight.

Behind the great mountain there showed the shimmer of the rising moon. The sky was bright, studded with stars, the Southern Cross just above the horizon, to lift higher for every night of their voyage. The schooner went easily shouldering through the seas, the wind abaft the beam, sheets well in, with the boom ends to the leeward rail, topsails set.

Hooper was not satisfied however. The man at the wheel did not suit him.

"A good helmsman has the thing by instinct," he said to Manning. "This chap sails by the card and he hasn't got the feel of her. He wants to keep her full and she's making too much leeway. I'll have to try them all out but I don't believe we've got a first-class steersman aboard, barring Andersen, and I don't want a mate taking a trick. We're losing time with that sort of chap. No good talking to him either."

The moon, like a disk of illuminated pearl, topped the fire-blasted peaks of Haleakala, poised there as if for flight and then soared upward. Manning watched the glory of it as Hooper turned toward the taffrail, impatient at the helmsman. Down in the cabin a clock chimed six bells. A sailor came aft and reported.

"Make it six bells," said Hooper, and walked to the ship's bell, forward of the main companion, and struck the time.

Edwards appeared from below and stood waiting. Manning noted the weatherwise way in which the steward cocked an eye at the topsails, then the wake. Hooper came aft again.

"Would you like coffee served on deck, sir?"

"None for me. I want to sleep when I turn in. How about you, Manning?"

"You'd have to put laudanum in it to keep me awake, but I don't want any, thank you, Edwards."

The steward lingered.

"If you'd like me to take a trick at the wheel, sir," he said, "I think I could get a little more out of her."

"You do, eh?" Hooper eyed him sharply. "Not tonight. You've been on your feet all day. But, if you can handle the spokes, I may use you, if it doesn't interefere with your other work."

"Yes, sir? Thank you, sir," replied Edwards incuriously, and went below.

"I wouldn't wonder if he could steer," said Hooper. "He's a capable chap."

"Too —— slick," quoted Manning.

Hooper laughed, looking aft. He suddenly left Manning and went to the companionway where the night-glasses hung on a hook at the head of the stairs.

"See that sail back there?" he asked his partner as he hooded the lenses and focused them.

Manning saw something that looked like a silver of pearl, far astern.

"Been trailing us all day. Overhauling us too. She's got the legs of us."

"What is your idea?"

Manning fancied that Hooper did not like the prospect. The skipper stood with his legs apart, balanced to the pitch and steady heave of the deck as the schooner lunged through the seas.

"Think they are following us on purpose?"

"Can't say. Some one might think they could hang on to us with a faster craft until we head up for the guano island and then beat us to it for possession and nine points of the law. Ten points in such a game."

"You mean Butler?"

"I don't really mean any one. Just an idea. We'll know before long. But I'm off Butler. I saw a bit of the real man in his office that morning. He wants guano, it seems. Better than gold-mining these days. He might be playing both ends to the middle. Grab it off if he can or arrange for an option from us if he can't do any better."

"Only there isn't any guano."

"True enough. But I don't like it."

IV

HOOPER had the morning watch, splitting deck duty with Andersen in default of a second mate. When Manning came on deck at seven he found the skipper watching the trailing vessel of the night before. She had gained considerably in the night. Hooper handed Manning the glasses just as the pursuer, if that was her purpose, came about and tacked across the stern of the *Mary L.* about half a mile away.

Through the powerful lenses Manning got a fine view of her, a schooner with a black hull, pointing high into the wind and creaming through the crisp waves, sheets well in for the tack, canvas unwrinkled—a beautiful sight. Brass twinkled here and there on her decks. Working up, she tacked again, the crew tailing on to the sheets with yachtsman-like precision. She did not falter in the eye of the wind but swung to her course and came charging down after the *Mary L.*, to leeward now but eating up the distance.

"Smart ship and smartly handled," said Hooper. "See how she came about. No fuss with her headsails."

"Looks like a private craft," suggested Manning. "A yacht. She may be racing with us for the fun of it."

"Soon find that out. She can go ahead all she wants to. Though I hate to be passed at that rate. If I had the *Moanamanu* I'd show her a thing or two. But I'll be glad when she gets off our horizon. She isn't a yacht, for all her brass. Her rigging is too business-like and her canvas too heavy. Look at her come."

The stranger, sailing a parallel course, forging up abeam, carried a private signal at her gaff and a triangle of flag at her peak. This last showed plainly, a white star in a blue circle on a scarlet ground.

"She's a yacht, after all," said Manning. "That's the flag of the Hawaii Yacht Club. I've seen it too many times at Pearl Harbor to be mistaken."

Hooper shook his head.

"She's not a yacht. Name's *Seamew*," he read off through the glasses. "But she may be harmless. She's dipping her flag."

He turned and shouted an order to return the salute. The *Seamew* tacked again, as if satisfied to have displayed her speed and not wishing to humiliate the *Mary L.* by crossing her bows.

"Sporting," said Hooper.

"Breakfast is ready, sir."

Edwards stood there, with eyes that watched the *Seamew*. He had a faculty of appearing suddenly, without noise, a steward's attribute that, to Manning, always was a trifle uncanny and annoying. With him was Andersen, ready to take over the deck.

"Know anything of that boat, Edwards? The *Seamew?*" asked Hooper.

"Yes, sir. Know her well. I've been aboard her, sir. A fast one. Belongs to Mr. Huddersleigh of Fanning Island. On her way home. Mr. Huddersleigh makes regular trips to Honolulu every few months, sir. I knew she was in the harbor, sir. But she was over toward Iwilei. You might not have noticed her, sir."

"Ah!"

Hooper's exclamation held relief in which Manning shared. There was no especial risk in any one trailing them down to Schwarzklippen but neither fancied the espionage.

"I've heard of Huddersleigh," said Manning. "King of Fanning Island. Exports shagreen mostly. For pocketbooks and polishing, until lately. Now sharkskin has gone up. They're using it for boots."

"He'll be on the same course as we are till we hit the line," said Hooper at breakfast. "Decent of him not to show us up too much. Gad! That chap can make fourteen knots on his best point of sailing. Sail rings round us on any wind. Doubt if we see much of him after today."

But they did. Hooper discovered unexpected talent in steering in two of the sailors, one of the Hawaiians and the Finn. The *Mary L.* developed latent speed as the skipper found out her best points. The *Seamew* had a good start of them, but on the third day they picked her up again, hull down, and from then on kept intermittent company. In lighter winds the *Mary L.* had the better of it. The men scented a race and entered into the spirit of it as Hooper set a big fisherman's staysail between main and fore and the *Mary L.* showed what she was really capable of.

He massed the men and crew at the rail and shifted them about to preserve the center of effort and, what with varying airs and Hooper's skill, matters evened up.

"Keeps the loafers doing something," he remarked to Manning. "Plenty of time for target practise later on."

Ten degrees north of the equator, the breeze began to falter and threaten to fail altogether. Fong's compatriot had overhauled the engine and Hooper prepared to abandon canvas for gasoline.

"We can take our time about coming back," he said. "We've got plenty of gas and we can strike a dead course for Schwarzklippen. We'll bid good-by to the *Seamew* now. She's due to change her course for Fanning anyway."

At noon that day the wind blew out altogether and they started up the engine. The *Seamew* lay a mile away, rolling in the calm. Hooper dipped his ensign in farewell salute and the Fanning's Island boat answered. Then they saw her canvas coming down, smartly smothered and reefed. Through the glasses a white wake showed at her stern as she swung off and took course approximately south-southwest.

"She's got a kicker, too," said Hooper. "Well, that's the last of her."

On divergent courses, the two schooners were soon out of sight of each other. The *Mary L.*, as Thompson put it, commenced to taxi across the line for her destination. At the evening meal Fong himself appeared to serve the after cabin.

"Where is Edwards?" asked Manning.

"That steward all time this afte'noon foolee too much with Ling along that engine, along that dynamo," said Fong in his sing-song pidgin-English. "He say he fixee wi'less."

Hooper frowned.

"Has he been interfering with Ling?" he asked.

Fong shrugged his shoulders.

"Too —— slick," he said just as Edwards entered.

"I have been testing the wireless, sir. Thought you might like to use it."

"What for?"

"I thought it best to have it in readiness, sir, so I overhauled it. I told you I could handle it when I joined, sir, and, as you said nothing to the contrary, I assumed it was a part of my duties. I waited for the engine to be started regularly."

"We'll not need it. Is it in shape?"

"I believe so, sir. I have no means of knowing whether my test sending was received, of course. It would not mean anything. And I have not picked up any message. Hardly likely to in these latitudes. But I think I can say it is in shape, sir. We might intercept some news once in a while if we had a regular operator."

He had taken over his duties from Fong, who left a plain impression on his exit that he did not think much of the energetic Edwards.

But the opinions of Fong and Ling, naturally a unit, were not shared by the others aboard. It began to get almost unbearably hot in the windless spaces. What breeze the schooner herself furnished, as she forged steadily ahead, averaging a hundred and sixty miles a day, seemed to come out of an oven. The putty wrinkled and crumbled in the seams, the brass was blistering and general lassitude held all hands by day, enhanced by the fact that there was little to do. But as soon as the sun dropped blazing into the sea and some relief came with night, Edwards organized entertainment.

He got together a quartet and he told tales that created breathless interest, broken by peals of laughter from the groups that surrounded him on deck, smoking through the long hours when sleep was hard to coax.

Prickly heat and loss of appetite, all the conditions that make for peevishness under such circumstances, were nullified by the ubiquitous steward. He seemed to have the capacity for making a personal friend out of every one aboard, saving the Chinamen. Often the afterguard, Manning, Hooper, Andersen and Thompson, regretted the dignity of office that forbade them joining in the after-dark amusement sessions.

By day, target practise went on with an hour set apart for it. Several of the men bid fair to become good shots; others proved hopeless and Hooper weeded them out as wasters of cartridges. The four ex-*lunas* and Edwards himself were evidently familiar with the use of firearms. Manning's steady nerves brought him to the forefront and Hooper was already an excellent marksman with either pistol or rifle. Two of Manning's assistants also shaped well.

The target practise began to invest the expedition with an earnestness of purpose that brought about more or less talk, much of it in a jesting strain, of the duties that they might have to perform. The general opinion among the crew prevailed that they would have trouble with the natives on landing and that some of them might be left as an armed guard against them or other interference if the guano-deposits proved satisfactory for exploitation. This impression Hooper and Manning allowed to stand for the present. Manning overhauled his diving-suits and that diversified the talk and provided fresh speculation.

THERE was a change in the two leaders as they steadily neared Schwarzklippen. Manning, seldom over talkative, grew taciturn, and Hooper began to flame with an eagerness that manifested itself in his eyes, in his nervous pacing of the deck, working out the daily position, his scanning of the horizon that he knew must, as yet, yield no results. The entire man emanated force and, at times, Manning, patching the rubber of his diving-dress, would think of him as a racing engine, constantly evolving unapplied power.

When they reached the borders of the south equatorial current, a hundred and fifty miles south of the line, the southwest trade began to blow with increasing steadiness and soon they were able to shut off the engine and forge ahead with increased speed under canvas. Hooper came below one noon to work his reckoning, his eyes gleaming.

He and Andersen compared and agreed and Hooper took out his chart and dividers.

"We should lift Schwarzklippen by dawn tomorrow, Manning," he said with a triumphant note.

The news spread about the schooner and all that afternoon watch on deck and watch below, with the idlers, gathered in groups and looked eagerly ahead, hours before there was any possibility of sighting land. Meanwhile there was oiling of weapons and a growing alertness in word and action.

With the exception of Fong and Ling, every soul aboard was on deck at the commencement of the morning watch. One of the Hawaiians was perched in the foremast spreaders before the sun leaped up and day suddenly blazed over the sea and sky. The wind strengthened with the dawn, blowing well aft of the beam, and the schooner surged along at a fast clip through curling, sharply faceted waves of sapphire, dazzling where they caught the sun.

Flying fish soared out of the sea, pursued by dolphins that leaped after them. Two bells came and then three and four. Fong brought up steaming coffee for the men and Edwards served the afterguard.

As the last stroke of five bells sounded the deep voice of the Hawaiian came floating down and back from the fore.

"Land-ho!"

They strained forward into the bows and the port rail, gazing to where the lookout pointed, a few degrees aport. Hooper handed the glasses to Manning and sprang to the mainmast, going up it like a cat, barefooted, as he had come on deck, his toes clinging to the rings, clasping the halyards.

A purple speck showed on the horizon's rim and gradually lifted from the sea, grim, desolate, uncharted. A cheer went up; breakfast was forgotten fore and aft as they crowded to the rail. Aside from Manning and Hooper, it meant little to them materially; they were not in the true secret of the voyage. But no one can sail for leagues across the ocean stretches where there is no plume of smoke, gleam of sail or promise of land, and raise an island unplaced upon the maps, without sharing the thrill of the discoverer.

Landfall, in such circumstances, ever partakes somewhat of the miracle; it heats the blood and rouses the spirit of adventure. There were risks ahead, they knew, fighting against odds with savages, where the penalty of defeat meant cruel death and horrid burial, and the ship's company faced it with an eagerness that brought a nod of approval from Hooper as he slid down the halyards and regained the deck.

He glanced at Manning triumphantly, as if he had vindicated his story, justified the diver's investment, but Manning only nodded back and put out his great powerful hand to grip the other's nervous fingers.

"Congratulations are almost in order," said Hooper. "We can make a landing this afternoon, if they'll let us. We'll land anyway," he added, his lips tightening. "I must overhaul that budget of newspapers for Steiner."

From his seniority of some ten years, Manning smiled a little tolerantly at Hooper as the skipper dived below. There was a good deal of the boy in Hooper's virile manhood, he thought, and then a burst of youth welled up in him and this time he laughed aloud, so that Andersen looked at him in wonder.

For the Goddess Adventure, who reckons time and the calendar and birthdays as a joke as long as a man's heart beats sturdily and he is able to stand on his hind legs, had taken Manning by the hand like a fairy godmother and he was young again. His blood tingled to his fingertips and he felt the glow of danger and achievement. For the first time, too, the pearls in the lagoon took on material value, material prospects. Hooper had said that they should be fully worth three hundred thousand dollars in the present market and a third of that was to be Manning's own.

With a score of years of hard work undersea, much of it dull and laboriously wearing, he had had thoughts of retiring somewhere near the sea with Fong as factotum, to sail a sloop, to dig in a garden and grow roses. Something like that. Now fresh vistas opened. The world was wide. And he was in the full strength of his prime.

A thought came to him and he followed Hooper.

"What about letting the crew in a little deeper on this thing?" he asked. "Telling them about Steiner and his men, at all events? The war is over but Steiner doesn't know it and I take it he won't be waiting on the beach for you to deliver him those papers. He won't be in any too good a humor after he reads them. And I suppose they'll be sighting us soon. Maybe making smoke from that signal-fire you spoke of. And, just exactly what are you intending to do with our Germans when we bag them, peaceably or otherwise?"

"March them in to that commandant at Honolulu," said Hooper. "Right past that cocky sentry who challenged me for a tramp. It will be up to him to extradite 'em or otherwise dispose of them. The ending of the war evens me up with Steiner personally. His conceit'll shrivel, like a kid's balloon when it's pricked. Though there have been times when I had other ideas of handling him. But I'll get the men aft and talk to them."

His speech was short and to the point.

"There is no guano, to speak of, on that island, men," he said. "My schooner was taken by a German raider and I and Mr. Thompson kept prisoners aboard of it under a German crew. Later one of our own cruisers chased us and we were wrecked in a storm on the island. The schooner lies in ten fathoms in the lagoon, just beyond an inner reef. There are belongings of mine hidden in her that Mr. Manning and his men will dive for. That is what we came after. The Germans are still there. They don't know the war is over."

There was a guffaw from the men.

"I got away in a whale-boat with Mr. Thompson. We were picked up at sea and brought to Honolulu. There are natives on the island who are a Melanesian tribe, not friendly to whites. We may have to pacify them. That is why I have brought you along, with arms. The Germans may need some explaining to before they accept the situation. We shall have to act as circumstances guide us. If we succeed in getting back my valuables there will be a bonus paid to every man aboard of two hundred and fifty dollars over and above his wages, Mr. Manning and I being partners in this trip."

He looked toward Manning, who confirmed the bonus with a nod. The men cheered, led by Edwards.

"We shall try and treat with Steiner, leader of the Germans, and tell him where Germany now stands," continued Hooper. "We shall try and treat with Tiburi, chief of the tribe. We do not wish to start bloodshed if we can avoid it. You have been prepared for a certain amount of trouble. But any landing-parties in the face of danger will be made up of volunteers."

Edwards led another salvo of cheering and one of the men he had furnished stepped forward.

"There ain't any of our crowd goin' to back down, skipper," he said. "Not for Heines nor for cannibals."

"I thought not," said Hooper. "That is all."

He turned to Manning as the men filed forward, talking it over.

"Good spirit there," he said. "They took it all easily enough."

"Didn't even seem to be surprized," commented Manning. "But they'll do a lot of jawing about the nature of your valuables from now on. That bonus was a good idea."

"It cuts into the pile considerably, and we'll have to sell some of the pearls to raise it, but it seems only fair to give them some sort of a share in the deal."

"Fair enough. You might offer to sell some of the pearls to Butler, instead of guano," said Manning with a laugh.

THE island grew, showing the crater, but hiding the green cone back of it. Frowning from the sea, it fitted the name that Steiner had given it. It looked like a barren volcano, waterless, incapable of providing for life. Yet the heart of it was thick with vegetation, Hooper promised. No smoke of signal-fire showed and, as they came closer, Hooper trained his glass upon the upper cliffs with a frown.

"Funny," he muttered. "There's no flag and the staff has gone."

"Might have been blown down?" said Manning.

"Fancy they'd have set it up again. I don't quite like the look of it. They may have smelled a mouse when they sighted us. If they thought I had got clear—but then they would have expected a cruiser rather than a schooner."

"They may have got heart after you started and built some sort of a raft or craft."

"Possible. But I don't believe it. They were getting too soft. Life suited them. No, sir, don't think they had the guts to tackle that. Things were too easy. But I don't like it."

"Can we see their camp, sailing past the open end of the crater, or are you going to go through the reef into the lagoon?"

"We couldn't see it plainly enough to be sure. And I don't care to risk that second reef-opening. I told you I thought it would have to be blasted. It's too narrow between the reefs for much maneuvering. Can't tackle it on the ebb, anyhow. My idea is to get in touch with Tiburi. If we can keep the fear of the white man in his heart he won't bother us after some gifts, the promise of more, and good care on our part to cover ourselves. We'll head up a bit and sail round."

The course was slightly shifted and they coasted the black, sheer cliffs of the volcanic crest, fissured and fluted here and there, devoid of all life save the wheeling gulls that rose and settled and soared out to meet the schooner, screaming at intrusion. The narrow promontory that joined crater to cone opened up and the sight of the latter, covered with verdure, a green jewel rising from a ring of ivory surf, heartened all of them and lightened the oppression of that silent, grim crater.

Still there was no sign of life, though they swept the beach and the outstanding ledges of the cliffs with glasses. No natives gathered on the sand, no canoes put out to sea. No wisp of smoke showed signs of habitation. Only the birds wheeling and wheeling overhead.

"Looks as if the whole place was deserted," said Manning. "Some sort of plague might have swept them, or they may have killed each other off, like Kilkenny cats, German against cannibal."

"Not likely. But there's something wrong," returned Hooper. "The natives would not be frightened into hiding by us. If they were frightened, and they are not that breed of cats, they would still be curious. Something wrong! If they are there they are not friendly. Steiner may have won out and be setting a trap with the idea of getting hold of the schooner for his getaway. That's the most likely thing."

"Or might be in league with Tiburi?"

Hooper shook his head.

"No. Tiburi is too sore about that woman deal. Steiner kidnaped his daughter. No! Tiburi might pull some treachery in a pretended pact, but Steiner would be too foxy. I— Listen."

They were now to the south of the island and the wind blew from it. Manning caught a booming note, distinct from the surf. It was followed by another and another, at pulsing intervals. It was the beat of a drum. And it was punctuated by a queer moaning sound, like the hoot of an enormous owl.

"War-drums," said Hooper. "War-drums and conch shells. Tiburi's out against us. This is not going to be duck soup. They are waiting for us to make a landing. Then they'll tackle us from ambush. That bush is full of warriors now, waiting for their chance. Too many odds. Not more than two or three places to land."

"What's your plan?"

"It's close to sunset. Nothing tonight. We'll tack out and hold council of war."

"No moon tonight, is there?"

"No. Why?"

"Then I've got a plan," said Manning. "And I think it will work with Tiburi."

V

MANNING closely surveyed the shore-line as they coasted about the cone and headed north again to complete the circuit of Schwarzklippen. The steeply slanting sides were thick with growth to the summit. Palms waved above a tangle of bush growth. Along the shore-line mangroves clustered thickly with here and there little beaches. The reef, with its double walls of coral, came closer in to the land than off the crater proper and in places the two barriers merged as one.

"What do you figure the average depth of that lagoon?" Manning asked Hooper, who was watching him frown at the land, slowly darkening as the sun dropped and the shadow of the crater fell across it. "Could a whale-boat get through that opening, do you suppose?"

He pointed to where the shifting line of spray rising from the combers breaking on the reef seemed a little less in volume. Hooper surveyed it critically.

"I imagine you could make it at the flood easily enough. Why? What is your scheme, Manning?"

"You say Tiburi was inclined to accept Steiner as a god. By this time he has probably found out that he is not a beneficent deity, if he is one at all, to judge by their present attitude."

He nodded toward the cone, now on their port bow. They were in its lee and the throbbing beat of the war-drums was plainer than ever.

"But I have had considerable experience with natives as a diver and there is no question but what the sight of a diver rising out of the sea knocks them absolutely cold—until they see you crawl out of your armor, like a hermit crab from its shell.

Then they know you are only a man but you are still ace high."

"Good reason for that," said Hooper. "There isn't a tribe but has its legend—they all tie up to the same source, I imagine—of magicians who are able to pass from island to island, group to group. A diver would seem like the biggest kind of a wizard. I begin to see your drift but why scare them stiff? We want to get on terms of communication with Tiburi. They would hide in that bush like rabbits and we'd never find them if you walked out on them."

"Not if I made them believe I was a friendly god. I've thought it out quite a bit, Hooper, and I believe it will work. But we don't want them to tie it up too closely with the schooner. Let's talk it over in the cabin."

Fifteen minutes later Manning's three assistants were summoned aft, Fong being busy with the evening meal. Hooper headed the schooner south, into the wind. The sun dropped; darkness rushed up, save for the stars. The canvas of the *Mary L.* was taken in and close furled. From the island she could not be picked up by the sharpest of the thousand eyes that had peered at her from the jungle and hoped that the white men might strike the reef or land unguardedly.

In the cabin Manning overhauled his diving-suit and worked over the fixing of some marine fireworks, Coston signals and portfires used on life-buoys. These he made temporarily water-proof. Thompson arranged a small box, in which he placed gifts that would be most likely to strike the fancy of the natives. This he carefully wrapped in thicknesses of tarpaulin. Hooper busied himself for a while in thoroughly greasing an automatic pistol.

"I prefer the other suit for general work," said Manning, as he and one of his men carefully inspected and tested the oxygen tank. "But it means a lighter of some sort and the pump, not to mention the pipe and life and signal lines. This leaves me free to go up on the beach. The main thing is to be sure they see me and there'll be no doubt of that."

"It's a big risk, just the same, Manning," said Hooper. "Of course we'll be covering you but if they did rush you, you'd be helpless. I mean as to quick action."

"Not so much as you'd think. I don't have to wear gloves. I could use my gun. Wouldn't take you long to get in to me. Besides, I've been thinking it's about time for me to take an active part in this business. Here I've been playing passenger while you've been working ship. I want to earn my share. All I've done is to put up some cash with the practical certainty of getting fifteen to one for my money."

"You are going to do the diving," said Hooper, his voice warm with approval.

"An hour or two of my regular line of work. Doesn't amount to shucks. Well, I guess we're ready, Hooper, when you are."

The schooner was well off the island now. It showed as a vague loom against the stars. Hooper ordered the engine started and set the course. The sound of the exhaust would be lost in that of the surf, he calculated. When he went below he found Manning stripped and about to put on a light combination suit of wool, long-legged and long-sleeved. Hooper gazed admiringly at Manning's brawn. The diver weighed close to two hundred pounds but there was no superfluous flesh, only big bones packed hard with muscle and sinew that rippled as Manning moved like grass beneath the wind.

He put on the rubber suit and went on deck, his two assistants carrying the weighted shoes, the helmet and the oxygen tank that was to strap upon his shoulders. Thompson carried the box of gifts—gaudy handkerchiefs, small mirrors, brass rings and beads—goods selected by Hooper in Honolulu for some such occasion. With Tiburi eliminated as an enemy, giving them the news as to Steiner's present circumstances, much of their difficulties would be removed and the more he considered Manning's plan, the more Hooper approved of it and credited the diver with an imagination that he had not suspected him capable of. He was beginning thoroughly to appreciate his partner.

The *Mary L.* chugged up to within a mile of the reef, then crept in closer. The cone showed dark as they came to a point opposite the place where they had first heard the drums and conch shells. The night was quiet, save for the drum-roll of the surf that showed faintly phosphorescent where it foamed over the reef. The tide was at flood now. It was three bells in the middle watch. Hooper did not doubt but that there were some of Tiburi's men awake, but he intended to make certain. Manning's rising from the sea was to be spectacular

A rocket soared up from the deck and rose curving to burst high above the cone in a shower of fiery stars that slowly settled down. Another and another followed, the last exploding in an aerial bomb, harmless but startling to the native mind.

A whale-boat was lowered and Manning got into the stern sheets with Hooper. Besides the crew his three assistants followed. Then Thompson. Rifles were handed down and the apparatus. They rowed for the reef and then along it, looking for the opening Manning had pointed out to Hooper. They found it without much difficulty and backed water. Hooper had the steering-oar. He watched for a big wave, gave command in a low voice and the stout blades bent as the boat swept through he reef-gate into the calm lagoon. With the surf behind them they backed water while one of Manning's men sounded from the bows.

"Little better than nine fathom," he reported.

Suddenly there came to them, borne from the land, the muffled beat of a drum, echoed, repeated. Tiburi was awake. In the boat they worked quickly but quietly. There was little phosphorus in the lagoon and they hoped to be unobserved. It would make the appearance of Manning more mysterious if this was the case. Manning put on his helmet and his leaded shoes and an assistant adjusted the former. His pistol was in his belt holster, together with a knife. A light ladder was attached to one gunwale with hooks.

THE crew edged to the other side to keep balance. Slowly, ponderous but not clumsy, Manning turned and slowly descended the ladder. A few feet below the surface he halted on the rungs, waiting for the little plop in his ears that would tell him the Eustachian tubes were open and the pressure adjusted. Then he went down the pliant rungs, Hooper watching his bulk, ringed and streaked with wreaths of faint luminosity. He carried with him the box of gifts under one arm and his fireworks were attached to his belt with slipknots.

Three quick tugs came and the cord slackened as Hooper coiled it in. Manning had reached bottom. The rowers rested on their oars, paddling now and then to offset the current of the flood and maintain their position. The others held rifles ready. They waited eagerly, hardly drawing breath. From the dark slopes of the cone the drums continued to boom. Now and then came the harsh hoot of a conch shell. The rockets had thoroughly performed their part in the night's entertainment. On the wrinkled surface of the lagoon the stars were reflected in broken, shifting lights. A hundred yards away the whale-boat was invisible.

The time seemed interminable before the watcher in the bows gave a slight gasp. He had heard rather than seen something inshore. Suddenly the green flare of two portfires broke out on the surface, well toward the land. The illumination extended almost to the boat, but Hooper did not believe the eyes ashore would focus on anything but the object that was rising from the sea, wading toward the beach. In one raised hand Manning held a red Coston signal that he had tipped with sodium underneath a sealed cap, now taken off, and the tube of carmine fire, ignited, flaked and sputtered down on his weird figure, contrasting vividly with the green glare from the portfires, afloat on miniature buoys.

The shining helmet with its goggle eyes, the metal shoulder-pieces increasing his great breadth, the rising sleekness of the rubber-clad body, streaming with water that reflected back the contrasting lights, the gleaming, widening circles that surrounded him as he stalked on, made him impressive enough to those in the boat; to the natives he must have appeared a veritable god or demon of the sea.

Drums and conchs ceased suddenly. Hooper could almost feel the intensity of those straining eyes in the bush. He could imagine the dropped jaws and superstitious consternation as the savages gibbered in their coverts, wondering what this awesome visitation portended. He had no fear now for Manning's safety, more for the possibility of overdoing the intended effect.

The Coston died down and Manning lighted another. He was only waist-deep now, advancing up the shelving floor of the lagoon. The portfires sputtered on steadily. The little beach between the mangroves that was his objective was blank. And it was sound reasoning that there were no natives in its immediate vicinity. Sound, also, that every movement of the supernatural visitor was noticed.

Manning reached the beach and stood erect, waving his Coston. Then he stooped and placed the box upon the sand well above tide-reach. From the bush shrill cries of terror sounded as he straightened up. Close by grew young cocopalms and palmetto scrub. He severed two palm-leaves, signs of amity, and thrust them on either side of his gift before he turned and stalked down the beach into the lagoon once more. The portfires died out as he submerged.

The boat edged in directly in a line for the beach, paddling softly under cover of the darkness, intensified by the going out of the chemical illuminants. Hooper hung over the stern, watching. In the bows the man with the lead sounded frequently, giving out his depths in a low voice. Then Hooper saw something glowing on the bottom like a submerged star. It was an electric torch carried by Manning, water-proof of case, with a powerful battery, part of his equipment.

"Back water there, men. Over with the ladder," ordered the skipper.

The weighted rungs slid down, the ladder tautened and shook as Manning mounted with the men seated on the opposite gunwale as before to balance his weight. He climbed heavily in and an assistant unscrewed the helmet and relieved him of its weight and the leaded boots. He took a seat in the stern as they steered for the entrance.

"How did it go?" he asked. "No trouble in making it. Fairly smooth bottom."

"No question of your making an impression," said Hooper. "You must have looked like the Old Man of the Sea himself. Only hope you didn't overdo it, from the friendship standpoint. Otherwise you could set up as a god tomorrow morning and have no fear of their not obeying you."

"So long as I stayed inside my outfit," said Manning. "If I took off my helmet to eat I'd descend from my godhood, I'm afraid. My idea was to remain as a hidden power for the present, with the promise of gifts or the menace of destruction fairly well balanced. And, of course, in league with you."

"We'll find out if they've taken the bait by morning," said Hooper.

Back on the schooner they sent up two more rockets as a climax to the program. Then they started up the engine once again, shifting to sail when they were well out. All night they tacked off and on, and dawn found them once more off the cone. Hooper focused his glasses on the beach. It was still deserted; there were no signs of natives on sea or land. But the box of gifts had vanished.

VI

"THE only thing to do for the present," said Hooper, "is to wait and see if it works out. We've got our stage set, or ready to be set. If they don't come out we'll have to scare 'em into submission. An invasion of the cone by you in your suit and one of your men backing you up from the water in the second would bring them to time. Only we'd have to round them up."

"There's a canoe coming out of the mangroves, sir," said Edwards. "More than one."

Like scary water-beetles, one by one emerging from the mangroves that apparently masked a fresh-water creek or an inlet, the canoes of Tiburi made their appearance. It was plain that the chief's brain had evolved two things. First that the apparition of the water-god was connected with the coming of the great white man's canoe, the second that had ever appeared in his realms, and the first had come only as a wreck. It was probable that they might have seen the whale-boat in the lagoon after all, possible that they had made out the schooner beneath the rising flare of the rockets.

The second thing was that both god and the white men were of friendly disposition. Instead of demanding sacrifice, the god had deposited gifts, some of which were similar to articles used by Steiner and his men. Cupidity and curiosity, building upon these factors, brought out the tribe, timid of a second appearance of the sea-monster, yet hopeful of more gifts, of an alliance with these rich and powerful strangers.

But they were wary. Steiner had not come to them bringing gifts. Steiner had stolen their young women. Steiner had fought them off with magic sticks that shot fire and missiles that tore holes through which life passed out swiftly. They carried their arms, spears of hardwood, others tipped with bone and sharks' teeth, bows and arrows and clubs. The canoes bristled with the display.

The *Mary L.* headed up into the wind and hung there, waiting for them. Some of the canoes held fifty men, sitting two to a thwart. The prows and sterns rose high, were carven and inlaid with shell and ornamented with colored streamers. In all there were a full five hundred warriors. First one and then another filed through the reef opening and spread out in crescent formation.

"You see," said Hooper, "this is a tribe who have never come in contact with white men. Everything we do is wonderful. We constantly perform miracles. That is why Steiner was able to handle them, once he had shown what his guns could do. All the old tricks can be played in full force and this is the time to pull them off. Some of them, at least. If Steiner sees us in combination with Tiburi he'll capitulate without trouble and we'll let him read his papers while we salvage the *Moanamanu*. It begins to look as if it was all ridiculously simple, thanks to you, Manning. I can talk their dialect and I'll coax them in, while you and Fong stand by for your cues."

The foresail was lowered with the topsails and jibs and the *Mary L.* stood up to the wind, moving slowly, under staysail and mainsail. By the port rail a four-sided screen of canvas had been erected. A ladder hung down into the water.

Inside the screen Fong, dressed in the suit that Manning had worn, was concealed. Manning's other assistants stood guard by the screen. In the cabin was Manning, clad in the more elaborate suit, ready to have the helmet adjusted as soon as the natives had been persuaded to come aboard. He sat on one of the plush settees of the schooner-yacht's furnishings, as if on a throne, prepared to receive new subjects.

Hooper called to him down the companion.

"Tiburi's in the biggest canoe," he said. "He's edging in. You'll have plenty of time to put on your helmet. I'll palaver with them."

"All right," answered Manning.

Edwards was with him, ready to adjust the heavy headpiece. He felt like the ogre in a child's play. A good-natured ogre. And the natives were only children in intellect, apt to be treacherous but about to be spellbound by majesty. As Hooper had said, it was all likely to be ridiculously easy from now on. No fighting, no bloodshed. He had no enmity toward Steiner.

Hooper had felt bitter, as was only natural, but with the recovery of his pearls assured, with the war itself having advanced prices sufficiently to cover the price of his schooner, even to indemnify largely the cost of this expedition, he was willing to turn over the Germans to the Government.

On deck, Hooper caught up his megaphone and called to Tiburi by name. Forty paddles struck the water in consternation, sending the canoe backward as if it were a living thing startled by the magnified voice that hailed them in their own tongue, that knew the name of Tiburi.

"Come without fear, Tiburi," called Hooper. "We are friendly to you. We would add to the gifts of Him Who Walks Under the Water."

Tiburi, sullen, crafty savage that he was, summoned his courage. He had to save his face or lose dignity. And the white man with the great voice spoke of gifts. He gave an order and the canoe stroked forward again. Then he stood up by the bows, leaning on the carven prow, tall and lean, naked save for a belt and shell-ornaments. His mop of fuzzy hair was orange-colored, his face was smeared with white and scarlet. His pot-belly, bloated by fermenting diets, showed in weird contrast to his bony body.

"Who call Tiburi by name?" he asked, gathering confidence as he spoke.

"Come closer, Tiburi, and see."

By the side of Hooper men were displaying gaudy cloth, holding out hands that showed gifts of some sort. Tiburi and his men could not see just what they were but they were things the white men brought, therefore precious.

Tiburi shouted an order and the rest of the canoes halted while his own advanced. On the beach other natives were gathering, women with shorn heads, children, old men, boys. Tiburi knew the eyes of his tribe were upon him. He would be the first to board this big canoe. He would get the pick of his gifts. And, perhaps, they might annihilate the white men after all, for they were few and he had half a thousand—he counted them by sets of ten fingers—ten times ten times ten.

The god—Him Who Walks Under the Water—was not in evidence. If they took the canoe and killed the white men they would have all the treasure; they would have their skulls. Perhaps they could do it before the god interfered. He might be sleeping or he might be far off, too far off to come before they had killed and looted and hidden themselves in the bush.

All this he thought as he stood by the prow of his canoe, two of the small round mirrors that had been left on the beach flashing in the distended lobes of his ears. And then his eyes bulged as he gazed on the face of the white man with the big voice. Hooper had put down the shell through which he had made his voice thunder. Tiburi knew that trick himself.

But this man. He was—he was— Surely this was the white man who had been a slave to Steiner, who had escaped with the other white slave in the boat—over whose escape Steiner had gone nearly crazy, cursing and punishing his companions, as Tiburi had been informed by the natives who had left him for Steiner but had fled back to him again, claiming that Steiner had blamed and beaten them for the escape of the slaves and the loss of the boat. And here was the other slave beside him.

"I see you know me, Tiburi," said Hooper. "Me and my friend. We have come back again, rescued by Him Who Walks Under the Water. And we bring gifts for Tiburi, who is also the enemy of Steiner. Come and receive them."

A crafty look came into the chief's eyes that Hooper could not interpret. He became plainly confident. He swaggered.

"I am your friend, white man," he answered. "As I am the enemy of him who was your enemy. I will come aboard."

The canoe came alongside. Hooper warned the savages before they could all leap for the rail, their eyes goggling at the lengths of cloth, the beads and brass rings they now saw plainly.

"Ten men only," he said, holding up the fingers of both hands.

Tiburi and his followers saw the ready rifles and knew what they could do. Tiburi gave his orders and the unchosen ones sullenly subsided, pacified somewhat by the gifts that Hooper ordered distributed. And the chief, followed by his bodyguard of ten, gained the decks and looked curiously, a little fearfully, about them.

HOOPER gave a command and the crew lowered fore and staysail and gasketed them. Tiburi blinked a little. He glanced over the side to where his canoes were gradully edging in, against his orders. But he was not displeased. This white man was a fool to lower his sails. True, there were the sticks that spat fire and death, but cunning might prevail. And then he frowned, as doubt and fear smote him. For the white man's canoe, without sails, without paddles, was beginning to move. Yells came from the savages left in the canoe, clinging to the rail, being dragged along with increasing speed. Yells came from the flotilla, from the shore. Tiburi's eyes rolled. What magic was this?

"Fear not, Tiburi," said Hooper. "It is the servants of Him Who Walks Under the Water who move us. We shall go out a little way. Here are gifts."

Tiburi, his mind jellied, fingered the things offered him without enthusiasm. He did not like the situation. It made him feel powerless. But when Thompson brought him a generous measure of gin, which he first sniffed, then drank, his courage came back to him with the warmth of his stomach.

And the schooner stopped moving. Hooper had started the engine for the double purpose of demonstration and moving away from the reef.

"Does the white man want the other white men given to him?" asked Tiburi.

"Perhaps. Can you deliver them?"

As he spoke Hooper suddenly stepped forward, pointing at the necklace of human teeth that the chief wore. He had caught the glint of gold. Of gold fillings.

"Where did you get those?" he asked.

Tiburi strutted.

"After you left, O white man," he said, "I, Tiburi, took the other white men captive. They used their fire-sticks but presently they were worn out. Fire came from them no longer. And they had stolen my women and beaten the men they had taken from me. So we took them. Some of them we killed. Their skulls hang in my house. These—" he lifted the necklace—"I took from one of them. Their flesh we did not eat. We fed it to the dogs. It was tough and too salty. Those we took alive we keep for our children to look at. Soon we may kill them. Now our women make a mock of them and they furnish us with amusement. Will you buy them from me, O white man? With gifts? Shall I deliver them alive or dead?"

Here was an unexpected turn. It explained the missing flagstaff, the lack of signal-smoke. Steiner's ammunition had given out and he had been captured. Hooper felt a revulsion of pity of the Germans. They were white men; they must be rescued. And he suddenly saw them caged in the savage village, jeered at and tormented, kept as white children, sometimes cruel, keep wild things they have trapped, or men who put beasts behind bars for a zoo. Only, Tiburi and his fellows would devise brutal tortures for their captives. Hooper's face grew stern.

"I may buy them," he said, "or I may come and take them. Is the chief of them alive?"

"He is alive. But how shall you take them unless you make me gifts? The bush is thick. My men are many. These are not all."

Tiburi pointed to the canoes, once more in a closing crescent to starboard of the schooner. With the retailing of his victory Tiburi grew more arrogant.

Hooper's brows met; his eyes flashed; his voice was imperative.

"How?" he demanded. "How shall I get them? I will show you."

Then he changed his tone.

"First I will show you gifts, Tiburi. Many gifts and many wonders. Come with me. Give him another drink, Thompson, and tell Fong to get ready," he added in English. "It's time to put the fear of God in their hearts once and for all."

Tiburi gulped down the gin and swaggered after Hooper. For a moment he hesitated at the companionway and then descended. He had talked big and nothing had happened. He would get many gifts for these captives of his. Perhaps, if he was cunning, he would get the gifts and more captives. The strong liquor mounted to his brain. He had forgotten about Him Who Walks Under the Water.

And then he saw Him, mammoth, majestic, seated on a couch of red. The same god, surely, who had walked up from the waters. He had not taken in many details but here was the same enormous head with its big, round staring eyes, the wrinkled flesh, that glittered in spots like the fire-sticks he had taken from Steiner but could not work.

The god held up a hand but did not speak. It did not seem to have a mouth but there were tentacles coming from the place where a mouth should have been, tentacles like that of the giant squid. Tiburi's knees weakened; his valor dissolved. As the god slowly rose he turned and with a howl of terror bolted up the stairs.

The canvas screen had been displaced and, coming over the rail, dripping with water, was another god, Fong. For a moment Tiburi stood paralyzed. His men had deserted him. Some had dived overboard, others were surrounded by the white men, holding fire-sticks. He himself was so surrounded. Not that the fire-sticks actually threatened, not that any hostile move was made. It was the look on the faces of the white men, the cold, boring look of Hooper's eyes, that convinced Tiburi that he stood between the devil and the deep sea, or rather, the devil stood between him, the deep sea or his own island, unless he did what the white men, who were in league with the devil, wanted.

This second Him Who Walks Under the Water stood silent, gazing upon Tiburi with enormous immovable eyes that seemed to read his soul, to gaze upon him with the cold wrath of an easily offended god. Its very silence was terrible, disdainful. It was too much for Tiburi.

Yet he was a chief and there was a certain stiffness to his make-up that had given him leadership and helped him to maintain it. Though his knees wobbled and his very bowels crawled about within his pot-belly like so many eels, he resisted the impulse to fling himself upon the deck on all fours. Savage though he was, he held manhood, and Hooper accorded him a measure of respect.

The skipper nodded to Thompson, with a jerk of his thumb toward the companionway. As Fong, terrific in his armor, the water puddling from him on the deck, stood mute and motionless, gasps of horror from his tribesmen caused Tiburi to look fearfully about and see the helmeted, tentacled head of Manning, the Him Who Walks, slowly appearing at the head of the companionway mounting from the cabin. The chief gulped convulsively, summoning the remnant of his courage, and words to help save his face.

"Show me the gifts," he said sullenly. "And I will deliver the white men to you."

"Good!" answered Hooper. "Tommy, bring up the stuff we laid out."

Thompson and two men brought up the trade and displayed it on deck. Tiburi's eyes glittered. He had a better brain than his fellows but it was apt to move in a groove, to hold but one idea at a time. Now it was greed, tinged with vanity. What a showing he would make before his wives, especially the new ones! But fear was still in the background.

"Tell your men to put them in the canoes, Tiburi. I shall go ashore with you." He ordered a boat lowered.

Tiburi looked at the gods.

"Do these go, also?" he asked, and his voice squeaked, despite all his efforts.

"They dwell in the sea," said Hooper, driving the lesson home. He did not want to have to bother with any more masquerading than was necessary. "When they leave the sea for the land, they bring the sea with them, unless they are friendly to those who live on the land. If you break faith with me, Tiburi, they will surely come and the sea will rise above your land and you and your tribe will be dragged to the bottom and be eaten alive, as a squid tears at a live fish with its beak."

Tiburi shuddered. Hooper made a salaam in front of Fong and the Chinaman lifted his hand. The whale-boat was lowered and four rowers got into it with the four men Edwards had brought. The trade was put into the canoe and Tiburi and his bodyguard of ten went overside. Hooper gave an order or two to Andersen and with Thompson prepared to enter the whale-boat after a word with Edwards. All the white men were fully armed.

At the gunwale Hooper paused, turned and dived into the cabin. Manning was now on deck, standing with Fong at the rail nearest to the canoes. Tiburi's big war-craft was paddling away with quickening strokes, eager to leave the vicinity of the Hims, yet anxious not to displease Hooper, with whom the Hims were so friendly.

Hooper came on deck with the bundle of newspapers destined for Steiner's perusal and enlightenment under his arm. He had no desire to augment the *ober-leutnant's* misery. He was going to relieve it, physically. Mentally, he thought a tonic would do the German officer good. It would help to make a pacifist of him until Hooper delivered him to the Naval commandant at Honolulu.

And that was going to be a problem. It would overcrowd the *Mary L.;* seriously affect the question of rations. All along Hooper had prepared for a fight with Steiner though he had been willing to avoid it. Now, in the whirligig of things, he had to rescue him. For they were all white men together. And the war was over.

The whale-boat, with springy strokes, forged up alongside Tiburi's canoe. The rest spread out to right and left, a savage escort, though the cannibals were plainly subdued. From the rail of the schooner, their shapeless arms folded, the two Hims were regarding the canoes.

"Do the gods not speak?" asked Tiburi.

"It is not necessary," replied Hooper. "They can read the mind and force their will upon it. And, if they spoke, their voice would crack your ears."

Tiburi nodded. He had asked humbly for knowledge.

"See," said Hooper, "I will prove it."

He let his hand, which was on the gunwale, trail in the water casually. Aboard the schooner, Andersen, watching for the signal, passed the word down to Ling. The engine started, was thrown into reverse. With a slight disturbance of the water the *Mary L.*, without paddles, without sails, began once more to move—backward.

A CRY went up from the canoes. Tiburi, gray of face but game, encouraged by the gifts that were piled in his canoe, shouted fiercely to his paddlers to keep quiet. But all the rest of the flotilla, like minnows threatened on the shoals by a hungry bass, went darting for the reef. The churning water was to all of them positive evidence that a Him was towing the schooner from beneath the water, perhaps with its hands clutching the keel. And the two Hims were still on deck. They pictured the sea swarming with lesser gods, horrible shapes.

Yah! Verily it was a wise thing to be friendly with these white men and their supernatural allies!

The *Mary L.* backed for a while, then sped ahead in a wide curve. Off the reef-gate, too shallow for her entrance, she paused, while Tiburi, following his craven men, went through and Hooper trailed him.

Manning, with the aid of Edwards, divested himself of his helmet and diving-dress. Fong followed suit. Manning was drenched in sweat. The masquerade, maintained in such weather, had been no joke. Fong was in much the same shape.

"Shall I bring you something to drink, sir?" asked Edwards.

"Got anything cool?"

"There's ice, sir. Last time we made it I stowed some away in sawdust at the bottom of the hold. It melts fast but there's a little left. While we're in port, sir, I'll start the machine up again, if you can spare the gasoline for the engine."

"Ask the skipper about that. But dig up a chunk of that ice and make me a long, cool drink with lemons in it. And you can put in a stick of gin, for once. How about it, Fong? Have one?"

Fong signified his assent, and, with the slightest raising of his eyebrows as if in tolerance of Manning's familiarity with a Chinaman, Edwards disappeared. The only liquor aboard was the small quantity brought along for such purposes as it had served with Tiburi, and kept strictly from the crew. Edwards was accountable for it. Presently he appeared with two long gin rickies. He did not hand Fong his but set it down.

"Edwards," said Manning, a bit sharply, "you're a good steward but I suppose every good steward is a good deal of a snob."

"Sir?"

"I've entrusted my life to Fong here a good many times. And I esteem my life a good deal more than I do silly ideas of caste. Fong is my friend. Serve him."

Fong's face was imperturbable as Edwards with an "I beg your pardon, sir," to Manning picked up the ricky and tendered it to the Chinaman. Manning was aware of a tension between the pair, a mental static that might crackle with discharge at any moment. The enmity between them was no small matter, it was plain. And he began to wonder whether he had not been foolish to force Edwards' hand. Still, the man was only a steward for a voyage.

"Does the skipper expect to bring those Germans aboard, sir?" asked Edwards. "I understand there have some of them been killed, but there must be nearly twenty of them. I was thinking of accommodations and the provisions, sir."

Fong gave a peculiar little grunt, not quite a cough. Manning knew what that meant—disapproval. But he was inclined to think Fong prejudiced against Edwards.

"I don't know, Edwards. I didn't hear what was said between Mr. Hooper and the chief, you know. There were twenty-three of them when Hooper and Thompson got away. I should think it would be a good idea to set a guard over them somewhere in the crater until we are ready to sail. Perhaps in their old camp. As for provisions, we can supplement our stores from shore in many ways."

"Yes, sir. Of course, sir. I hadn't thought of that. The plan of frightening them with the diving-suits was a tremendous success. I should call it a great idea."

"Ah!" said Manning dryly. If there was anything he disliked about Edwards it was the suggestion of flattery the latter injected into much of his talk. "That will be all," he said.

Edwards withdrew, still with a faint but distinct suggestion of his lack of comprehension of a cook being left drinking on an equality with the skipper's partner in the cabin. Mild disapproval.

"Don't like Edwards any better now, Fong?" asked Manning.

"I tell you one-two time he too —— slick," answered Fong. "All the time he ask too many question. What for he ask so much? Because he want to know. What he know, he use. Too —— slick."

Manning finished his ricky reflectively. He had a high regard for Fong's judgment of men. And a tiny distrust of Edwards had crept into his own mind. Perhaps he would bear watching. Not that he could do much, he decided.

VII

A CROWD of naked children, who had been poking bamboo canes through the bars of a stockade, fled like so many monkeys before the approach of the white men accompanying their chief, diving into the jungle from which their eyes stared in awe and wonder. Tiburi strode ahead and, pointing to the enclosure, which was literally a great cage, roofed as well as walled with bamboos stoutly driven into the earth, cross-barred with others, exclaimed—

"There are your white men, O friends of Him Who Walks Under the Water."

Hooper approached with Thompson close to the stockade and peered in. Shadows from the surrounding bush darkened it. A few shafts of sunshine streaked it here and there with light, a dirt compound in which were raised a few tent-like structures of palm-leaves, dried and interwoven. For a moment he could see nothing else save a few calabashes in the foreground and some shards and husks of coconuts.

The place was damp and stank of decay and filth. Sprawled out beneath the miserable edifices he made out the prone figures of men, brown as natives, but bearded with long, lank hair, apparently naked, listless, almost lifeless, apathetic to everything.

One of them stirred, feebly got upon all fours and crawled out from a shelter. Out of the bush of matted blond whiskers and tousled hair there shone, in a ray of sun, the light-blue eyes of a white man, a Teuton. The eyes widened as their owner caught sight of Hooper and his companions.

With an effort he got to his feet, grasping a staff of bamboo, and tottered forward. He stopped five feet short of the stockade, his face working with unbelief, with growing credulity, with a wild, feverish gleam that held fear. Then the fear vanished and something like hate, wan and overwrought, took place. The bony shoulders straightened, the head went back.

No one, friend nor foe, could gaze on such a sight without pity. All the resentment that Hooper had held in the back of his brain against them, remembering the crews he had sent out in their own boats from the sunken ships, remembering even his own faithful Kanakas, the cook and 'Polu the mate, remembering his own servitude, dwindled, vanished. The pity showed in his eyes. And the man in the stockade glared back defiance. It was Steiner.

Back of him his comrades were coming out, blinking, dragging themselves, exhausted with effort before they compassed half the distance to the bars; squatting, with chests heaving painfully with the effort of progress, mere shells of manhood, with eyes that lacked the fire in their leader's, eyes that had learned to look only for fresh torment.

Where the sunbeams striped and spotted them, scars showed, the sting-marks of insects, half-healed festering wounds. One or two had filthy rags about their loins; the rest had none, or had ceased to care for decency. Their blue eyes were pallid in the deep hollows, ribs and hips protruded, elbows and knees appeared frightfully swollen between the sticks that represented their limbs. Hooper turned to Tiburi with a sudden blaze in his own eyes before which the chief quailed though he did not understand the reason. Were these not the enemies of the friend of Him? Had he not delivered them, still alive, to be repaid for what they had themselves done when masters?

Steiner's voice was a croak, seeming to come unwillingly from deep in his chest. Hooper thought that none of them had spoken for a long time.

"It is you, Hooper?" he said in guttural but excellent English. "So, you escaped! And you have come back. In force. Or have you come back to this No Man's Island to escape your conquerors?"

He stopped and his knees trembled. He gripped his staff and struggled for mastery, for strength to go on talking. His teeth gritted with the effort and his eyes dilated. Hooper fancied his mind hanging in the balance.

"*Deutschland, Deutschland über alles!*" croaked Steiner.

Hooper's pity was tinged with admiration. Here was a man, for all his mistaken creeds.

"Give me the chocolate, Thompson," he said.

Thompson gave the skipper the cakes of concentrated nourishment he had brought up from the stores and Hooper proffered them between two of the bars. Steiner made no move to take them. Hooper tossed them within and instantly the men began to crawl toward them, tearing at the paper and foil with their teeth, munching at them like starving apes.

"The war is over, Steiner," said Hooper.

"*Ja.* And we are over all. You, you with your —— chocolate, you have run away and you think to revenge yourself upon me. But you will pay. *Ja!* For you have lost your country, American pig. My race is master. For me——"

He shrugged his shoulders and all the bones of his torso shuffled hideously beneath the thin covering of skin and tissue and worn muscles.

"Germany did not win the war, Steiner. And now there is no war. I have not come for revenge. I have come to rescue you from Tiburi."

"You lie! Pig of an American, you lie! It is impossible!"

But conviction of the truth crept into him from Hooper's steady, almost sympathetic glance. Steiner began to foam at the mouth; his skull-like face was convulsed. His eyes watched Hooper as the skipper untied and unfolded the papers he had brought. His lips curved back over his teeth and he shook like a leaf, clutching his bamboo support.

"Here are papers, printed papers, dating far back, Steiner. I expected you would doubt my word and I brought these to convince you. Don't make a fool of yourself and tear them up. I do not want to taunt you. The world is trying to be at peace again. I shall send you up clothes and food so that you can feel fed and decent again. You shall be taken out of this place."

"And then what? Give me the papers. Unless they are some trick."

"I would hardly go to all that trouble, Steiner. You will see they are authentic."

"What do you intend to do with us? To take us prisoners? I'll rot here first."

"You can take your choice, Steiner," said Hooper coldly. "You will be under guard, because there are a good many of you and, when you get back your strength you may attempt tricks yourself. But you are not prisoners. There is no more war between us. I will take you and your men back to Honolulu in a few days and from there, I imagine, you will be sent home to Germany."

"No."

"Or you can stay as you are. Don't be a proud fool, Steiner. You've lost. Germany has gone back across the Rhine. I'll send up those things I mentioned and then we'll transfer you to your old camp on the crater terrace till we sail. I didn't come back on your account, but I am giving you choice between Tiburi and Germany."

"If you speak the truth—" Steiner's tone quavered, for he felt that Hooper was not talking lightly—"by what right do you take me back? This island belongs to no man. You have no authority here. I will accept nothing from you."

"Better take the papers." Hooper tossed them inside the palisade. "You will be more reasonable when we come back."

Steiner spurned the newspapers with a kick. He snarled at Hooper, broke into a torrent of Teutonic invective and turned his back, walking away. His shoulders heaved. His spirit was in the throes of humiliation. But his men dragged themselves up to the bars. They took the papers and glanced at them. One of them was able to read the English characters and he began to spell out to a little group. Others begged for more chocolate. As Hooper turned away they set up a wailing cry.

"We'll be back," Hooper assured them. "What have they been fed on?" he demanded of Tiburi.

"Coconuts," replied the chief. "A man can live on coconuts."

Hooper turned away down the bush trail that led past the village to the sea. He did not want to break with Tiburi, but his heart was sick within him.

"I never fancied I'd feel particularly sorry for Steiner, Tommy," he said. "He had to have the news, and the papers were the best way of convincing him. But I think of no greater torture than it will be for him to read them under the circumstances."

"Either break him or make him commit murder, first chance he gets," said Thompson. "Not that I'm not sorry for those poor devils. They've been starved and prodded and stung half to death. Tiburi ought to get a taste of his own medicine. He ought to be fed on half a coconut a day, an old one, with sour milk, till his pot-belly blows up with gas."

"For a cannibal, he's been lenient," said Hooper. "Though it was only because white flesh makes them sick. We can't take it out on Tiburi. But I'll give him a few pointers about how to treat white men before we leave. Of course he had some repayments of his own to make to that crowd but he has got to learn to respect our stock, the white race. How, I'll have to work out.

"We'll tackle that inner reef-entrance," he went on. "Blast it through enough for the schooner to get into the crater lagoon. Then we'll get the pearls and sail away from this place as soon as possible. No Man's Island? That's a good name for it.

"You can go back with the clothes and food, Tommy. Maybe Manning will want to go. We'll transfer Steiner and his crowd to the schooner. A day or so will work wonders with them. They need quinine."

Tiburi halted at his village. He was keen to examine his gifts more carefully, to array himself in them.

"I'll send back for the white men," said Hooper curtly. "I want some fish and fruit from you, Tiburi. I'll pay you for them. And I may need some of your men for work. We shall go to the crater this afternoon.

Him Who Walks Under the Water will be with us. Both Hims."

Tiburi blinked. Savage-like, he had temporarily forgotten the Hims.

"All that you want is yours," he said.

"Thanks to Manning's idea of the diving-suits," said Hooper to Thompson as they descended to the beach and the waiting whale-boat.

VIII

AS A final object-lesson to Tiburi, the *Mary L.* proceeded under power to the crater. Steiner and his men, many of them pitifully weak from fever, dysentery and semi-starvation, were assembled amidships between fore and mainmast. There seemed little occasion to guard men in such condition, but Hooper took no chances, and four of the crew patrolled with automatics and rifles.

With the completion of the task well in sight, Hooper unleashed his energies. After a short consultation with Manning he ordered Steiner to be brought down to the cabin. The *ober-leutnant*, clad in white ducks that fitted him fairly well, braced by the food taken up to the stockade, held himself with rigid reserve that did not lack dignity, despite his tangle of hair and beard.

"I am going to set you and your men ashore on the terrace, Steiner," said Hooper. "In your own camp. You will be supplied with provisions and utensils and you will arrange for your own cooking. You will also have medicines and bedding. You will not attempt to leave the terrace."

Steiner, erect, impassive, said nothing. But his light blue eyes were baleful. He carried the newspapers under his arm.

"You will be guarded, for your own safety as well as my own peace of mind," went on Hooper. "I do not trust you. When we are ready to leave, we shall take you with us to Honolulu. That is all. I have provided the means for hair-cutting and shaving," he added.

Without a word Steiner turned and left the cabin, followed by the man who had come with him as a guard.

"He hardly looks dangerous," suggested Manning. "But I've an idea the man is consumed with curiosity. He knows you did not come down here solely on his account. And that type is always dangerous."

"None of the crowd are seriously sick," replied Hooper. "A few days of good food and a little medicine and freedom from that stockade, and they'll pick up again. They are a sturdy lot. Sixteen of them, all told. That means Tiburi has seven skulls in his house. I don't see what they could do but we had best be careful. There were some articles in those papers that spoke of punishment to those Germans who had been foremost in horribleness. Steiner has several boats' crews on his mind—not on his conscience. He may fear reprisal at Honolulu. A trial, or being handed over to the Allied authorities for court martial. I hardly think it likely, but it is possible, of course. That will be up to the Naval commandant or whoever takes them over.

"He'll likely instil that idea into his men and regain some official control over them. Shouldn't wonder if he has already by sheer example in that stockade prison. He was the only man who retained any show of grit. I wouldn't wonder if the rest of them were sorry the war ever started and glad it's over. But they are all puppets and Steiner is their strong man."

"He'd like to get possession of the schooner and emulate the survivors of the *Emden*, I imagine," said Manning. "But I don't see where they've got much chance to do more than grit their teeth. Have a hard time getting away from that terrace with Tiburi waiting to scoop them up and glean more gifts as a reward."

"We'll guard them, just the same. I'll use those four men Edwards gave us for one watch. Time they began to earn their wages. Smith, Holabird, White and Hayes. Andersen and Thompson, with the Finn and another sailor, can relieve them. Watch and watch, eight hours. That leaves your assistants free for your job."

Andersen came part way down the companion to report.

"Heading up for that reef opening, sir."

"All right, I'll take the deck. Port and starboard boats to be ready after we anchor. Edwards will superintend putting supplies aboard for the Germans. We are going to maroon them on the terrace until we sail. Arm Smith, Hayes, Holabird and White with rifles and automatics. Extra clips and full magazines. They're to go on guard until nine this evening. You and Thompson will relieve them. I'll see you about the details later."

They followed the mate on deck where

he prepared to carry out his orders. Hooper himself mounted to the fore-spreaders to con the schooner through the entrance in the outer reef. The tide was flooding and there was plenty of water under their keel in the narrow break in the coral. He ordered the wheel aport and the *Mary L.* entered the placid channel between the two reefs, coming to anchor in fourteen fathoms with a spring cable to a kedge carried to the inner reef for extra precaution. The barometer was steady, the weather promised fair.

The boats were filled, Manning and Hooper in the stern of one, Thompson and Edwards in the other. All four carried pistols. Two armed guards were in each boat. The second entrance was plainly too shallow for any attempt to take the schooner inside the lagoon proper. And it was wide-ledged. Hooper and Manning both gaged it closely as their boat went through.

"Take days to blast that," said Manning. "Waste of time, I think. You'll be needing the whale-boats, I suppose. Why not get two big canoes from Tiburi and put a platform on them for my equipment?"

"Good idea. You are going to use the suit that needs the air-pump?"

"I prefer it. May use both. Can't tell, till I make a descent. Sand may have filled in. In that case I'll use Fong to help me. Where is the wreck?"

They spoke in low tones. It was obvious that the sailors were all ears, leaning far forward on their strokes to catch a word.

"About a quarter of a mile to the right," said Hooper. "We'll take a look at it as we come back."

The gap in the side of the crater, which had once emptied it of lava and later admitted the sea, showed like the blow of a giant's ax in the cliffs of obsidian. As they neared it and caught a fair view of the inner walls the contrast was startling. Half of the crater was in shadow, though it was only midafternoon. The other half showed a jungle of vivid green, palms lifting here and there, water streaming down the sides. One of these cascades fell to a tiny beach to their left, just inside the entrance.

At the far end the great images stood on their stone terrace, staring at the invaders with blind eyes, elliptical in shape, carven deeply in the lava. As they came closer, a trick of light and shade gave them a semblance of crafty watching. There were eleven of these gods, graven and set up by a forgotten race. The largest was in the center and the cliff had crumbled under its weight, a fissure showing beneath the pedestal, so that the image tilted forward at a dangerous angle, threatening whoever intruded into this crater temple.

Trees had sprouted along the terrace and vines twined between the slim trunks. One of these *lianas* had fairly lassoed the smallest god and lifted it from its pedestal into the air.

The bodies had been dwarfed and distorted. The great faces had long, disproportionate noses above grim lips. There was nothing of benignity about them. They seemed to be biding their time, in brooding resentment, like strange monsters turned to stone. Back of them showed clefts in the cliff, the caves of which Hooper had spoken.

Below the terrace two trails led right and left in zigzag from the beach where Thompson and Hooper had been kept. There, too, were caves, but open to the water. The trails had been fashioned into stairways with wide, shallow treads, faced once with stone slabs that had been shoved out of place by the rank growth of bush and grass. Some were entirely displaced.

The terrace was nearly twenty feet in width. On it were the grass houses that Steiner had built, still in fair preservation. The Germans were escorted to their old camp and the guards installed after the supplies were landed. As the boats rowed off, Manning, twisting in the stern, saw Steiner standing beside the great central image, less in height than the massive pedestal, staring down at them.

HOOPER ordered one boat back to the schooner and steered his own along the inner reef. Manning got ready a water-glass he had brought with him, a hopper-shaped, lidless box with a glass bottom, part of his outfit. Hooper gave the order to paddle slowly and hung over the side, one arm raised. Presently he dropped it and the men ceased rowing.

"Back water. Easy! There, Manning, we're right over her."

The diver plunged the glass of his finder below the surface, leaning far over the gunwale, his face lost in the box.

He saw, far down through the crystal water, as if he had been looking through green glass, the broken hull of the *Moanamanu.* Shoals of brilliant-colored fish swam about above it and played over the decks and through the gaps in the planks. Sea-growths had sprung up already, waving gently in the undercurrents. The bottom was sandy, patched with coral, thick with marine shrubbery. The rowers poised their oars, their eyes shifting, wide with curiosity. The dripping from the blades to the surface of the still lagoon was the only sound in the boat.

Manning raised his head.

"Masts all gone by the board," he said. "Nasty tangle of rigging. Decks are badly broken, but that would be the air. Inner decks likely intact. But there'll be sand inside the hull by the looks of it. We'll have to clear it and that is a tedious job. We'll make two descents a day It's clumsy work using hand tools. Two days' job, I reckon it. Make it three, after we get started."

"We've had enough for one day, I think," said Hooper. "I fancy our friend Tiburi will be round bright and early tomorrow to see if he can get some more trade, not to mention gin. We'll have the tribe on top of us most of the time. Like so many kids and, as long as you and Fong are working in the suits, as harmless. We'll set some of them to work fixing up your pontoon for you. Logs across the canoes and then gratings and planks for the real deck will do it. The rest can stock us up with fresh provisions.

"Look at those mullet," he cried as a school of silver fish rose above the surface. "Two and three-pounders. We must have a mess or two of those before we go. Finest eating in the world. We'll dynamite 'em. That's the only use we're likely to have for the stuff, I'm thinking."

He spoke buoyantly and Manning was in like mood. The sight of the sunken wreck made the pearls seem more real, almost tangible. The diver's experience told him that the task that lay before them was not overdifficult. Soon they would be off for Honolulu, with a third of a million dollars in gems aboard. And, from this adventure, he looked forward to others. With Hooper. Where and what, time would show. There was always something to be turned up south of Cancer for men of their kidney. All thoughts of retirement ashore, or cruising for pleasure in a little sloop, had left him.

At nine the relief went off to the terrace and the four guards came back to report that Steiner had established order in his camp and that the men were cheerful. They had cleared out two of the houses and occupied them. There was fresh water in one of the caves.

"Last I see of 'em," Holabird told his skipper, "one of 'em was playin' barber to the rest. The officer, he got shaved first of all and had his hair clipped short to his head. He's got one house all to himself and two of 'em told off to wait on him. Three or four seem pretty sick but the rest are lively enough. Cooked up some chow that smelled mighty good. Turned in by now, I guess."

"All right, Holabird. You four will relieve Mr. Andersen's guard at five in the morning. Better turn in yourselves now. You'll be on until two bells in the afternoon watch."

The man saluted and went on deck.

But neither he nor his companions turned in. When Manning and Hooper went up—Manning having proposed and Hooper having accepted the suggestion that in the absence of the mate they should split the deck watch, for Hooper did not place implicit confidence in Tiburi—they found the watch on deck, the watch below and the four guards gathered in groups, discussing something avidly in low tones.

There were no duties to be performed at anchor, except a perfunctory one or two; there was no especial rule that the men should not stay on deck, but Hooper after an hour sent the guards below with the admonition that he wanted them to get their rest in order to perform properly their duty.

Manning was to watch until midnight and Hooper turned in. The seamen kept chatting and Manning, pacing the after-deck, saw the glow of their pipes and heard now and then a voice raised and quickly hushed. The topic of conversation was evidently both exciting and communal.

He could not eavesdrop; if he went forward they would stop talking. But he sensed something afoot and was not surprized when at last, the watch below having exhausted their interest or dulled it sufficiently to sleep, a figure came forward along the port rail and spoke. It was Fong.

There being no helmsman, Manning was alone on the after-deck. There was no moon and Fong, padding in his felted shoes as softly as a cat, drifted like a shadow. The watch on deck had gathered in the bows, taking anchor privilege of a cat-nap.

"What is it, Fong?" asked Manning.

"Crew talk too much along that sunk ship inside lagoon," said Fong, his voice dropped to a pipe, clear enough to Manning but inaudible six feet away. "Too much they talk why-for you dive. Some think gold. Some speak peahl. Plenty too much talk they make. They speak along those fo' men Edwa'd bling with him. Talk they should have mo' big piecee pay. All same divide that gold, that peahl. Want that two hundled fifty dolla you plomise. Want mo'. Want it now. Tomollow. That Edwa'd talk along that way, I think. Make tlouble."

"Edwards wasn't on deck."

"Too slick fo' that. All same he tly make tlouble. Tomollow you see. I smoke one li'l pipe in galley. They forget. They think me sleep. I sabby all they talk."

"All right, Fong. Thanks. I'll talk it over with Mr. Hooper."

It was food for thought. The wreck and its mystery had infected the crew. Talk of treasure. Enormously magnified, without doubt. Breeding greed.

Hooper was not disposed to make light of it when he came up at eight bells.

"I'll have a little talk with Edwards," he said. "I suppose he has been entertaining them and himself at the same time. But that crew is poor material for bolshevism. We'll nip that in the bud. The mistake we've made is to have not told them at the start what we were after. That it was my own property. But we'll mend that. We have no proof that Edwards is in this. Fong and he don't hit it off."

"Fong doesn't jump at conclusions," said Manning. "Good night."

At dawn the first canoes of Tiburi put in an appearance, hovering outside both reefs until the chief came along in his big canoe, two hours later.

Manning had come on deck again at four, had seen the relief go off to the crater at five and the boat return with Andersen, Thompson and their two assistants, eager for a mug-up and sleep.

Tiburi sheered alongside at six bells, greeting Manning with a grin. It was the first time the chief had seen him, not dreaming that here was Him Who Walks. Tiburi was togged up in beads and rings and gaudy trade handkerchiefs knotted about his loins and he was evidently much pleased. He made signs of wanting to come aboard after he sensed that Manning could not understand his talk, a fact that evidently lowered the diver in his estimation.

Edwards came on deck at this point and approached the rail, calling out a greeting in native.

"Do you talk Melanesian?" asked Manning.

"I know something of the dialect, sir."

Manning was conscious of annoyance at this fresh proof of Edwards' ability. The man was too clever to be a steward, he decided. And for the first time he wondered why the man had shipped. A real distrust of him began to evolve. And then he realized he might be biased.

"Wants to come aboard, doesn't he?" he asked the steward.

"He says he brings gifts, one big gift," said Edwards. "He'll be wanting something in return, sir. Including gin. Shall we let him up?"

"With five men only. And call the captain."

"Very good, sir."

Edwards spoke a few words and spread the fingers of one hand. Instantly Tiburi and five natives came over the side, grinning amiably. The chief had a bundle in his hand tied up in *tapa* cloth. The canoe was piled up with fruit, fish and two young, freshly slaughtered pigs. These were handed up and deposited on deck showily while Edwards called Hooper, who came on deck in his pajamas.

Edwards followed with a gin-bottle, at the sight of which Tiburi drooled. At a gesture from the skipper the steward poured out a generous measure in a glass. Tiburi reached for it with one hand and preempted the bottle with his other capacious paw. His men watched him with envious eyes as he swallowed the fiery stuff, ignoring the glass after he had emptied it and applying himself to the bottle. The package in *tapa* cloth he had put between his feet.

"*Tzhah! Evah!*"

He smacked his lips with supreme content then broke into a babble of Melanesian. Edwards, standing by Manning, translated for the latter's benefit.

"He says he brings one very big gift, to show his friendship. He has never before made such a gift. And he hopes the skipper will bear that in mind when he makes gifts in return."

Tiburi finished his oration and then did the same thing to the bottle of squareface. Apparently it had no other effect upon him than to make him genial and warm his pot-belly, which he rubbed appreciatively. Then he squatted on his haunches and unrolled the *tapa*-cloth bundle.

SEVEN hideous, gruesome things rolled out clumsily on the deck. They were the heads of men, not skulls, but heads smoked for preservation. The curing-process had apparently not been completed. The dried flesh looked like gutta-percha; the twisted lips were set in sardonic smiles. Three of them bore wisps of yellow mustaches. The others were clean-shaven. None of them had beards.

Up to the time of Tiburi's successful coup against Steiner's camp, they had evidently possessed a razor but no shears. The hair was long, save for one head, which was bald. And from one of these had come the gold-filled teeth that decorated Tiburi's necklace. He picked up one of the heads by its tow-colored locks and proffered it to Hooper with a smile that showed his filed teeth, and another flow of words.

"To give away heads," he says, "is to do what no other chief has done. Now he has delivered all the skipper's enemies, so far as he is able."

Hooper stood his ground, surveying the relics gravely. Manning had harder work to control his feelings. Hooper turned to Edwards.

"Bring up some trade," he said. "Not too much. And one of the trade axes for the chief. Bring something to put these in."

He appeared to Manning to be thanking Tiburi with sufficient emphasis to suit the chief, who replaced the heads in their package and stood up, expectant of the return gifts. Edwards appeared with handkerchiefs and beads and with a cheap hatchet which Hooper presented in person. Tiburi took the ax and felt its edge, wheeled and brandished it suddenly above the heads of his men, delighted as a child with a new toy.

"We'll have to give those heads decent burial," said Hooper to Manning. "They prove that he is properly impressed with us, at any rate."

"We'll have to keep him away from the schooner while we are diving," said Manning. "If he sees Fong or myself with our helmets off, or even being rowed over to the pontoon fully dressed, he'll smell a rat. He seems smart enough. Gods wouldn't use a boat, not water-gods, anyway. If he ever tumbles to the fact that we are just men, recognizes the fact that the god is me, dressed up, there'll be trouble."

"I've thought of that," said Hooper. "It's easily fixed. I'll tell him the Hims are going to get something for us out of the wreck. He knows about the wreck, of course. And I'll tell him they are going to establish a tabu. We'll set up stakes on the reef with red cloth on 'em and put out buoys with red flags. They'll keep outside them and we'll make them far enough way from the pontoon to keep them guessing. We can rig up a screen on the pontoon like we did on deck."

He spoke to Tiburi authoritatively and the savage listened with awe creeping into his features. Then he smiled, answered, went to the rail and shouted an order, gathered up his gifts, looked longingly and suggestively at the empty bottle and with his men departed overside; paddling away through the inner reef toward the crater. The other canoes followed him. Two canoes had darted away at his command, going fast in the direction of the cone.

"He will respect the tabu," said Hooper. "He has sent for two canoes for your pontoon and his men will furnish green timber for the under platform. Also all the provisions we want to take. They are going to camp on that little beach just inside, where the water all comes down, so as to be handy. Partly fear, partly hope of more gifts, and mostly curiosity.

"What's the engine running for?" he asked Edwards as he caught the sound of the exhaust.

"I ordered it connected up with the ice-machine, sir," said Edwards. "We need some and I thought a cake of ice might surprize the chief. Nothing like a little magic to keep them impressed, sir."

"Humph! All right." The ice-machine was part of the original equipment of the *Mary L.* and its product was very acceptable. "Look here, Edwards," Hooper went on. "Have you been talking with the men about what we are after in the wreck? They seem to have got some exaggerated ideas about it. I'm going to have a talk with the whole ship's company later."

"They've been wondering about it, naturally, sir," replied Edwards frankly. "The idea of a wreck and divers would be sure to stir up talk. They mentioned it to me, some of them, and I told them I didn't know. Suggested they'd all know for themselves before long. But you can't keep sailors from gamming, sir. They've got an idea it's gold, I think." His face was incurious, his manner usual.

"All right, Edwards. I'll attend to it. I'm holding you responsible for the stores, from now on, with Mr. Thompson on guard-duty. And the gin."

"Yes, sir. I shall be careful, sir."

Late in the afternoon, when White, Holabird and the two other guards returned from the terrace, Hooper assembled all the crew. Thompson was to talk to the two sailors with him and Andersen. The mate, Hooper had talked to in the cabin.

"See here, men," he said. "There's been talk among you of not being satisfied with what has been promised you. What of it? Out with it, one of you. Talk up!"

His voice was brisk with authority. It was the first time he had shown sternness and the men stiffened to the deep tone and the flash of the skipper's eyes. They shuffled but said nothing. Back of them Fong stood impassive.

"Come now," warned Hooper. "I'll have no behind-the-hand grumbling aboard. You, Holabird, step out."

"Me, sir. I——"

"You were gamming with the rest of them. Talking about shares. We'll settle this right here and now."

Holabird hemmed and hawed as the men looked at each other in confusion, wondering how the skipper had known of their talk. And they shoved Holabird to the front.

"We—we wanted to know just where our bonus was coming from, skipper," he said hesitatingly. "An' when we was to get it. That's natural, ain't it? You might turn us off at Honolulu, an' a pore man's word is no good against a rich man's." A muttered "aye" from the rest encouraged him.

"There's a law for treasure-trove, ain't they? Or they ought to be. Shares for all on the job."

Hooper's eyes blazed and he advanced a step. Holabird quailed a little but faced him, his eyes shifting, inclined to be belligerent.

"Treasure-trove!" thundered the skipper. "Who said anything about treasure-trove? I told you there were valuables aboard that wreck. Mine, as the ship was mine. This is a legitimate enterprise to recover my property. You're talking close to mutiny, my man, and I know how to deal with that."

"And if you don't get it, what about the bonus?" asked Holabird. "Nothing signed as to us gettin' it one way or the other."

Some one prodded or pushed Holabird as Hooper strode forward. He lurched, stumbling, one arm out, against Hooper. As the latter held him off, Holabird, in a sudden frenzy struck out. Instantly Hooper countered, side-stepped and hit him on the side of the jaw. The man slumped like a meal sack. For a second it looked as if there would be a rush. Manning's hand dropped to the holster of his automatic. Rifles lay on the hatchway in accordance with trading-vessel regulations.

"Get forward, all of you," roared Hooper.

They obeyed. Holabird began to stir.

"A —— bad thing to have to do," said Hooper to Manning. "But, if I hadn't, they would have misinterpreted it."

He stood over Holabird, who opened his eyes and gazed up at him vacantly, then with an ugly gleam.

"Your own fault, Holabird," said Hooper. "Some one pushed you into me. I wasn't going to strike you till you hit out. Now get down to your bunk. You'll get your bonuses at Honolulu if we carry this through. Tell the rest of them that and warn them to stop their silly jabbering."

Holabird got up slowly, nursing his bruised jaw. Manning thought he threw a look of appeal toward Edwards but the latter was not looking at him. Holabird sullenly saluted and went forward. Suddenly the atmosphere had changed aboard. There was a rift between forecastle and afterguard.

IX

NEXT morning the rift had closed to all appearances. Tiburi was on hand with his men at dawn, bringing the two big canoes for the hull of the pontoon and saplings for the under deck. Every one worked with a will and the atmosphere seemed cleared. Holabird and the other three of the relief guard went away in the whale-boat cheerfully, Edwards with them, carrying to the terrace some of the fresh fruits and fish Tiburi's followers supplied.

There was a surplusage of labor, willing, but in the mass unintelligent. The natives in their canoes got in the way. Tiburi was prodigal enough with his orders and, if Hooper had not put a stop to it, they would have brought enough island provender to stock a battle-cruiser. He was forced to establish the tabu lines early in the morning, as soon as there was enough lumber in sight for Manning to complete his pontoon.

Although he made no protests, plainly in awe of the Hims, it was evident that Tiburi did not relish the tabu. Hitherto that had been his supreme privilege on the island and his obedience to the restrictions of another made him feel as if he had lost face to some extent. The schooner was a powerful magnet for the savage chieftain. It was the treasure-box that held many gifts, that furnished the gin he craved. He had strong liquors enough of his own but this brew the white man supplied was different. More pungent and with a speedy stimulus to his stomach that the native ferments no longer held.

Hooper was quick to see this mood and to meet it.

"The schooner is tabu between the time the sun goes down and comes up again, Tiburi," he said. "It is tabu everywhere within the red cloths while the Hims are helping us. There will be many gods below the waters and they do not wish to be spied upon. If they become angry I can not stop them from visiting their wrath upon those who have displeased them. So long as the red cloths fly you and your men must keep outside the marks. But the water-gods do not work all day and, when it is safe, I will take down the cloths and you are free to visit the ship. But only your canoe must come alongside and only five of your men must board with you."

Tiburi looked his surprize at the five fingers and promptly held up ten. But Hooper frowned and shook his head.

"Five, I tell you."

"No sense in taking any chances at this end of the game," he told Manning when he returned from setting up the tabu stakes in the reef and putting out the floating markers. "No sense, either, in getting Tiburi peeved so long as he serves us. But his kind is always treacherous and they have memories only a little better than apes. As long as the object-lesson is in front of them, they respect it, but they hold only one idea at a time, whether it is a matter of gifts, of supplying their stomachs or making war. I learned that in the New Hebrides.

"They'll take a notion to 'make their village strong,' as they call it, which is just showing-off, or a chief's son will die, or a crop will fail. Then they will swoop down upon some friendly trader with whom they have been chumming for months and murder him, seizing the excuse to raid his store.

"His goods have been tickling the back of their minds right along. Tiburi has no one to show off to but his own following, and this Him Who Walks business has to some extent set him down in their opinion. But they'll keep the tabu so long as we don't maintain it all the time."

Manning glanced at the fluttering strips of red cloth. Hooper had drawn a wide circle about the pontoon and the yacht. With the canvas screen, opening seaward, and the natural confusion of several figures on the raft, together with the bulk of the pump and other equipment, it would be hard for the savages, keeping the distance, to distinguish much of what was going on. The canvas screen would act as dressing-room for the divers. Manning nodded his approval.

"We'll change on the pontoon," he said, "and carry the suits back to the schooner every night. They'll need overhauling. Working in sand is liable to wear the rubber. Pontoon's ready to anchor. A bit to shore of the wreck with enough cable to allow for rise and fall of the tide. The currents will set us up and down a bit."

Hooper nodded in turn. Such matters of adjustment he knew to be necessary as well as Manning, but this was the diver's job and he was content to let him carry it through without suggestion. Manning knew his work. So did his assistants. They were all competent and they labored to the point, Fong with them, like men who were used to each other and respected each other's capabilities. The under deck had been laid in place, lashed and spiked. On this spare planks and gratings made a smooth surface, well supported by the two buoyant hulls of built-up planks, sewn with sinnet, calked with native gums. The outriggers had been left on the canoes and the contrivance was a complete success.

"I'll make two descents a day, with Fong," said Manning. "An hour underwater each time. Perhaps more, but it's exhausting work. It's the sand that bothers me. Could you warp in the schooner closer to the reef without much risk, Hooper?"

"So long as the weather holds, yes. Why?"

"That schooner yacht of ours has some fancy quipment that will be useful, like the ice-machine. I mean the fire-hose. The best way to handle sand is by hydraulic force, the same as they wash gravel banks for gold. If we couple up both those hoses they will reach across the reef and down to bottom, I think. If not, we can sew up some canvas, I suppose, for an extension."

"I see," said Hooper. "Attach to the engine and the pump and give you a strong stream at the nozzle. That's a new idea to me. Fighting water with water."

"It works," said Manning. "Tricks to all trades. The hose is a mean thing to handle down there but there will be two of us. Will you tackle that end of it while I anchor the pontoon? We ought to get everything ready today for a descent tomorrow morning, if we've any luck."

Tiburi got no chance to board the schooner that day. The tabu flags did not come down. All hands labored hard to complete the preliminaries and the sun was close to the horizon before Manning announced it satisfactory. The canoe flotilla, between twenty and thirty craft, drawn up as if about to witness a regatta, remained well beyond the bounds all day, some of them fishing as the afternoon wore on, but all eager to watch what the white men were about, half-fearful of some demonstration from the Hims.

Tubiri left with his big canoe in midafternoon. Hooper guessed him sulky and, as soon as it could be spared, sent Edwards in a whale-boat over to the little beach where the chief had settled himself. He bore a propitiation in the shape of a few trinkets and two bottles of gin.

"He was a bit peevish," the steward reported on his return, "but the gin mellowed him, sir. I showed him a few little tricks and got him amused."

The sailors who had rowed Edwards snickered at this as they held on to the anchored pontoon and Hooper looked at them sharply.

"What kind of tricks, Edwards?" he demanded.

"Nothing much, sir. Just parlor conjuring. I used to do it sometimes for the passengers aboard the *Moana* at a concert. Like this, sir."

He held up a dollar and palmed it, showed it vanished, produced it from the nose of one of the sailors. Then he took out a bandanna handkerchief from his coat pocket, spread it on the pontoon deck, folded in the corners, spread another one over it and, when he raised this again, the first cloth was piled with strings of beads, small mirrors and brass curtain-rings.

"I buried one of the bottles in the sand, sir," said the steward with a deprecating manner. "Then I showed him the mango trick, only I used some scrub *pandanus* of different heights. A Jap showed me how to do that and it made a big hit with Tiburi, especially when I told him to dig under the roots and he found the bottle. I've done quite a bit in that way down in the Fijis, sir, where I learned my dialects, and it always impressed the natives. Tiburi and his men have never seen anything of that sort, sir. I promised him to show him how to make water boil without fire—the Seidlitz-powder trick, sir."

"Humph!" Hooper exchanged a glance with Manning and narrowed his eyes. "That's all right for this once, Edwards, but, after this, Mr. Manning or myself will do the wonder-working. Too many wizards spoil the show."

"Yes, sir. Very well, sir. Sorry if I overstepped, sir."

Edwards, with Fong transferred to the pontoon, had volunteered to cook, and he went off to the schooner to get supper ready.

"That chap's too clever and too fond of showing it," Hooper said to Manning in a low tone. "Yet he never does anything without a plausible excuse tacked on to it. But I'll have to offset his tricks or Tiburi will be thinking him the whole show, next to the Hims."

"I agree with you," answered Manning. "Fong said it long ago. Too —— slick."

THE next afternoon, after the second descent, with the tabu temporarily removed, Hooper received Tiburi and ushered him into the cabin, where he fearfully took a seat upon the red-plush transom where Him Who Walks had been throned, glancing about him as if he expected punishment for his temerity.

Hooper, like all trading captains, had a stock of simple tricks on hand for the diversion and amazement of unsophisticated natives. Most tribes were familiar with them. Their own wizards used them, mixed in with devices of their own. But Tiburi appeared to brook no conjuror in his tribe and he himself was ripe for wonderment. Steiner had shown him certain things and Edwards had gone further. Hooper prepared to cap the climax.

He served the gin himself, taking the bottle from Edwards and dismissing the steward in a manner that showed plainly who was the supreme authority aboard. He winked at Manning as he set down by the chief a second tumbler which he stated contained water, knowing Tiburi would ignore it. He himself had a third glass. This he sipped as Tiburi gulped down his gin. Manning had also helped himself to water, which he drank.

As Tiburi poured himself another *quantum*, Hooper reached out for his extra glass and set it close to his own. He had placed on one of his fingers one of those paste diamonds made famous in minstrel shows and the chief's eyes had never left the sparkling bauble. Hooper set the fingers of the ring-bearing hand about one glass and lifted it.

"Can you make fire come out of water, Tiburi?" he asked. "Can you make water boil without fire?"

"Only the gods can do that," answered the chief a little uneasily. He was alone in the cabin with the two white men who held authority on the schooner and he did not like it. "Talu did that when he brought up the smoking islands from the bottom of the sea," he said.

"It is easy," went on Hooper, and poured one dissolved Seidlitz powder into another.

Tiburi's eyes goggled as the mixture sizzed and apparently boiled over. He gasped when Hooper quaffed half the hissing draught and handed the rest to Manning to finish. He hastily lifted the half-empty squareface to his lips and let the stuff run down his throat to restore his equanimity. But Hooper was not through. Another gin-bottle stood in a rack, uncorked. He took this and a tin cup beside it and poured out a little liquid into the latter.

"Now stand away," he ordered.

Tiburi watched him fascinatedly as he struck a match and tossed it into the ounce of gasoline. It flared up with a vicious roar toward the open skylight and Tiburi incontinently bolted for the deck. The sight of his men checked him and he turned his back on them, his face gray with fright that he strove to fight down. If this white man could do this with water what might not the Hims accomplish?

Hooper and Manning had followed him and Hooper drew from his finger the mock diamond.

"Because you are my friend," he said to Tiburi, placing the fake in the chief's hollowed, slightly trembling palm.

Tiburi straightened. Delight banished fear for the time.

"*Eyah!*" he exclaimed, and exhibited the glittering thing to his five men. "Here is a gift from a friend to a friend!"

And, while his followers jabbered, Tiburi strung the diamond on a sennit plait that had held a disk of pearly shell roughly carved into the semblance of a frigate-bird. He swelled his chest so that the jewel broke out into little rainbows in the sunshine, and offered the pearl ornament to Hooper.

The skipper took it and handed it on to Manning, who examined and returned it.

"Beware of a cannibal offering gifts," he said with a smile.

"True enough," said Hooper. "But we've got his goat for the time being."

"And put Edwards' nose out of joint," muttered Manning.

Hooper pointed to the west.

"The sun sinks," he said to the chief. "The ship will soon be tabu." Tiburi seemed glad enough to take the hint and his canoe was soon racing for the crater.

"How did you get along today, Manning?" asked Hooper. "First chance I've had to ask you."

"Good progress. The hose works well. Some sand will drift back with the tide but we've got the bulk of it shifted. It's mainly shifted in between decks and packed pretty solidly. But the floor of your traderoom seems still solid. The hull will be filled up underneath, clear into the frame of that hatchway, but I wouldn't be surprized but what we got to the pearls the first trip down the day after tomorrow. I shan't need Fong for that. He can go back in the galley again."

"Don't you like Edwards' chow?" asked Hooper quizzically.

"I'm not stuck on anything he does," said Manning.

X

MANNING had been down for an hour and a half. It was the morning on which he expected to retrieve the pearls and Hooper was anxious, not for the gems, but for the man he had come to know as his friend, to give some of that whole-souled affection peculiar between man and man, a bond, that, once given, outlasts all wear and tear.

He crouched at the head of the ladder inside the canvas screen, peering down at the wreck. He could see nothing of Manning, hidden by the ragged upper deck, but a stream of bubbles came up constantly from the azure transparency and showed the pump was working.

Beside him were two of the diver's assistants. One held the signal-cord, the other tended life-line and air-tube, careful that the latter should not kink or chafe against the side of the pontoon. Outside the screen, in plain view of the wondering ring of natives in their canoes beyond the tabu flags, the third man toiled steadily at the compressing-wheel of the pump.

The hose had been disconnected. Manning had declared the way clear but he seemed to have struck trouble.

Hooper fidgeted with his watch. Fong had come on deck on the schooner and was standing by the rail, watching the pontoon.

"An hour and thirty-eight minutes," said Hooper. "Pretty long spell, isn't it?"

"I've known him stay down two hours when he wanted to finish something," answered the man with the signal-cord. "That's Manning's way. He's all right. He'll be done up when he comes out but I'll bet my bonus he's got what he's after. If it's there."

"I guess it's there all right," answered Hooper, a little nervously.

"Tides play strange tricks," said the man.

"Hey, Bill, you got a bite," cried the second helper.

The signal-cord jerked.

"He's coming up," said the man excitedly.

Hooper lent a hand to the stout life-line. Leaning over, they could see Manning coming into view through the broken planks. There was a swirl of water about him and his figure was distorted. If he carried anything they could not see it. He clung to the life-line and swayed up through the ten fathoms, Bill coiling the signal-line as it slacked, the third man doing the same with the air-pipe.

Manning caught the ladder, got his feet on the lower rounds and rested to adjust the pressure. Then he came up heavily as the pontoon tilted slightly. His helmeted head appeared and Hooper and one of the men got hands under his shoulders and hoisted him on to the float, where he sat limply. His hands were chafed raw, the ends of his fingers bloody. And he carried no package.

But Hooper did not think of that as he helped to unscrew the helmet and held to Manning's lips a tot of gin. The diver swallowed the stuff and smiled.

"Got 'em," he said. "Touch and go. Another month and we'd never have found 'em.

"In my kit-bag," he continued as one man unlaced his heavy shoes and the third helped him wriggle out of his suit. Belt and its knife, pendent crowbar and water-proof pocket were already off. Hooper picked them up and felt in the bag. His eyes brightened as he touched several cylindrical objects and drew one out, the wax paper broken but the foil intact.

"Tarpaulin washed away, rubber rotted," said Manning, getting to his feet a trifle groggily, sweat matting his thick crop of hair and streaming down his face. "The sand had packed up from below, as I thought it would. Worked in through the chinks in the hatchway framing. But the pearls were there. Found one or two packages as I clawed the stuff out. Regular sandstone. Count 'em, Hooper, I think I got them all."

"They're all here, Manning," said Hooper, clapping the other on the shoulder and gripping in affectionately. "We'll start back tomorrow. Edwards says Steiner's crowd has livened up considerably. Not that I'm considering them." He weighed the little packages in both his hands, his face aglow. "That third divvy doesn't go between us, Manning," he went on. "It's halves, partner."

The two shook hands.

"A third was the agreement," said Manning. Then, as he read the other's eyes, "Except on one condition."

"Granted."

"We go shares in everything from now on. I'm sick of diving. Let's get a schooner and go into something together. Cruising or trading. Unless you're tied up?"

The thought of some woman in connection with Hooper crossed his mind for the first time.

"Not me," replied Hooper. "No strings, petticoat or otherwise, if that's what you're thinking, old man. So, let's go aboard, boys. We'll break the prohibition rules for once. Outside the three-mile limit, anyway."

They all laughed at the light quip, exhilarated at the ending to the trip. Manning put on his clothes, they set the suit in the boat and rowed off to the schooner where Fong was waiting them.

"Heap sabby you get all same," he said, his yellow face beaming.

The men crowded up, scenting the excitement. Hooper sent Edwards for the liquor.

"A drink for success, men," he said. "Home tomorrow."

They gave three hearty cheers, led by the steward.

It was Andersen's shift aboard, his relief almost up. He came on deck at the cheering, followed by Thompson. Manning took Hooper aside.

"Where does Thompson come in?" he asked. "Just on the bonus?"

"I'm looking out for him," said Hooper.

"You mean *we* are, partner," answered Manning.

As they started for the cabin, the packages still unbroken, Andersen asked about the tabu flags.

"They heard the cheering, sir," he said. "Getting worked up."

"Keep them flying until after chow," said Hooper. "Then you can chuck the things away. We're through. Come on, Manning. I've got something to open your eyes."

And he hooked his arm familiarly through that of the diver.

Manning had seen pearls before but never so many, so symmetrical, so full of fire. The foil had preserved their luster, kept them from the grinding grit of the sand. They were fuzzy with delicate bloom. Hooper separated them and placed some in pairs.

"Worth fifty per cent. more when they match up," he said. "I've worked hard to get this bunch together." He fondled them, holding them in the cup of his hand, but there was no greed in his voice.

"Miracles to come out of a sick shellfish, aren't they?" he said. "Look at those two pairs, Manning. Worth ten thousand dollars in Tahiti this minute. We'll take 'em to better markets.

"Hang it, man," he broke off, "we haven't fixed your fingers. They are raw."

"Feel as if they'd been sandpapered," admitted Manning as Hooper gathered up the pearls and put them away in a chamois poke. "But, my main trouble is my stomach. It's buckling. Two hours down uses up all your fuel. What are you going to do with them?"

"Split 'em," said Hooper. "I bought two belts. You'll wear half and so will I. Come into my cabin and we'll fix them while Fong's bringing chow."

Edwards had come in and started to lay the table. He glanced at the leather bag but said nothing.

"As soon as I've stowed away my outfit," said Manning. "Got any adhesive in the medicine kit?"

"I'll get it, sir," said Edwards and disappeared. Manning and Hooper put away the suit, which had been carried down earlier by Fong. The steward came back with tape and scissors and Hooper cut out the pieces with which Manning patched his torn fingers. Then, in Hooper's cabin, they put away the pearls and adjusted the belts. The meal was ready when they came out. Andersen and Thompson joined them.

"You can tell Steiner to get ready to move tomorrow," Hooper said to the mate. "On the ebb, about noon. We'll come for them at six bells. And, as you go off, take up those tabu buoys and stakes."

"What are you going to do this afternoon, Manning?" he asked when the mate and Thompson had left, after discussing the find a little. "Turn in?"

"Got to dismantle the pontoon and get the pump aboard."

"Your men can do that. I imagine you're tired out."

"But not sleepy. And I usually am, after a long spell under. Why?"

"I feel like a holiday. Let's go out and get a mess of mullet. We'll give Tiburi another exhibition of fire and water. And it's a heap of fun."

He spoke like a boy and Manning entered

into his mood. The job was done, the reaction strong.

"I'll go with you," he said, "if it's only to see you don't blow off an arm. I've seen several cripples in the islands from that game."

"No danger, if you're careful. Cut the fuse right, ruffle it up a bit, stick a match in it, light the match, count two and heave the half a stick. Toss it fairly high. Better to have it explode too soon than wet the primer and sink. Don't take much to stun the fish if we find a school. Tiburi hasn't ever brought us any mullet. They're rare eating."

AS THEY rowed off, with two sailors at the oars, a box of the dynamite in the stern, they passed Manning's assistants working on the pontoon. The pump had already been sent off to the schooner and the men were taking apart the decks preparatory to turning over the canoes to the natives. A dozen canoes drifted at a respectful distance, the savages looking on at the white men or gazing into the water.

"There'll be twenty of them diving down presently to see what they can in the wreck," said Hooper. "Soon as they feel sure the Hims are gone. They know we've got something worth while out of it."

"How about Tiburi?" asked Manning. "If he comes off to the schooner? I don't see his canoe."

"There it is." Hooper pointed to the crater-entrance with the big canoe coming out of it. "I left strict orders with Edwards. No men to come aboard but the chief and only one bottle of gin. We'll gift him up tomorrow before we leave. He can have everything that's in the traderoom."

"Fong'll keep an eye on him," said Manning. "I don't trust that steward, Hooper. He happened along too handily in Honolulu with his four men."

"They've behaved themselves all right, except Holabird, and he took his lesson well enough. And we've got the pearls," he added as he slapped his belt, hidden beneath his clothes. "That looks like a school of mullet."

They rowed down the lagoon inside the reef in the direction of a ripple that showed just above the surface. But the fish broke water before they reached throwing-distance. And they were not mullet.

Manning helped Hooper prepare their grenades and they rowed about the reef. But luck, with them in the big adventure, was niggardly with smaller gifts.

"Fish-sharks inside," said Hooper at length. "Won't go out till the tide turns. Mullet are all inside the crater lagoon. Get some tomorrow before we leave. Better go back and see what Tiburi is up to. His canoe is still alongside."

The pontoon was broken up by the time they reached the schooner. Hooper gave an order for hoisting the boat to the falls and climbed the gangway ladder, followed by Manning. Tiburi was not on deck. Fong came out of his galley and pointed to the cabin. Hooper frowned and moved quickly to the open skylight, looking down, Manning beside him.

Tiburi sat on the red-plush seat with Edwards beside him. They seemed to have been deep in conversation and the steward gazed up suddenly with a startled air, duplicated by Tiburi, who rose uneasily. An empty gin-bottle was on the table. The two partners hurried down the ladder and faced them. Hooper's brow was dark with a frown.

"Who gave you the idea of entertaining Tiburi in the cabin?" he demanded sharply.

For once Edwards seemed nonplussed. He licked his lips before he answered.

"I didn't suppose there was any harm in it, sir. I didn't mean it as a liberty. No men came aboard and there's only been the one bottle. The chief is crazy about the furnishings, sir. He wants this settee as a gift."

"Did you give it to him?" Manning's voice was sarcastic and the steward gave him an ugly glance.

"I did not, sir."

"All right, Edwards," said Hooper dryly. "You may go for'ard."

The steward left with a quick look passing between him and the chief. Tiburi had gathered himself together. It was plain to both the white men that Edwards had lied about the liquor, though there was only the one bottle in evidence. Tiburi was inclined to swagger. His eyes met Hooper's almost defiantly.

"I am a big chief! A great chief," he said, pounding his chest so that the mock jewel danced. "Many men obey me." He worked his fingers rapidly. "Edduadi, he big chief, too."

"Not so big as I am. Not so big as my friend here," said Hooper quietly but with meaning emphasis. "Suppose you are so big a chief, do you want to drink some of that firewater?"

Tiburi winced but recovered, swaying a little as the fumes of the gin vapored in his brain.

"Not so big as Him Who Walks Under the Water, Tiburi," went on Hooper, observing him carefully.

He fiddled in his pocket for a gasoline cigar-lighter he had filled and carried along to ignite the dynamite-fuses. Suddenly he brought it out and snapped it under Tiburi's nose. The flame sprang up, almost singeing the chief's skin, upsetting his drunken show of belligerency.

"*Eyah!*" he cried, jumping back and retreating backward up the companionway. "I am great chief! With many men. You give me many gifts for me, for my men. I am not afraid!"

His effect was spoiled a trifle by the haste with which he mounted, still facing them, got into his canoe and paddled swiftly off, calling to the other canoes and gathering them in his trail as he sped for the crater.

"Now what's got into his fool head?" said Hooper. "Just gin?"

"Edwards," said Manning.

"I agree with you. He's gone a bit far this trip. But what is *he* up to?"

"We may find out tomorrow when we go into the crater," suggested Manning.

"I don't think Tiburi'll make trouble," said Hooper slowly. "He's drunk. Aside from the Hims, who won't appear again, he knows we've got fire-sticks. Just as well we didn't find any mullet. If he starts anything we'll make him think the island's going up. We'll take along the dynamite when we go for Steiner. And we'll go in with the relief tonight, you and I, ready for pranks. He'll cool down when he's sober. It wouldn't do any good to cross-examine Edwards."

"He'd lie, anyway," said Manning.

"Probably. I think with him it's a case of swelled head. Good thing all round we're through."

But Tiburi made no demonstration, hostile or otherwise, when they changed the guard that night. Coming and going, they saw the natives seated peaceably round two fires on the little beach, the low sound of chanting sounding across the water.

"Peace *meles* (chants)," said Hooper. "Better than a drum, and dancing. Tiburi will be aboard tomorrow before we sail, for his gifts. May as well leave him happy. He's served his turn."

"Going to give him the plush settee?" asked Manning.

"I've a good mind to. And make Edwards pay for a new one," laughed Hooper.

XI

THE early hours of the next morning slipped by without a sign from Tiburi, without sight of canoe or native. A lookout had reported to Manning, acting as officer of the watch, that he thought he had seen canoes passing through the reefs and had heard the sound of paddling.

This was close to dawn but before the sky had begun to lighten. Manning could see nothing and could hear nothing other than the soft booming of the surf and he fancied the man mistaken, for he had used his eyes enough at sea to be sure of them.

The relief, going in at nine o'clock with Hooper in charge, keenly on the lookout for possible trouble, saw canoes hauled out on the small beach, among them Tiburi's own easily recognizable craft. A number of natives stood at the water's edge watching the whale-boat pass and repass with Andersen, Thompson and the two sailors of the relieved watch. Everything seemed as usual.

"Steiner and his crowd are starting already to pack their dunnage," Hooper told Manning. "Rest and food have done them a world of good already and I think the shaving and hair-cutting did as much as anything. Steiner is a bullet-headed junker once again and his men jump to his authority. Told them we'd come off for them about eleven. He seems to have made up his mind to take it philosophically. It being a case of Hobson's choice."

"How about Tiburi?" asked Manning.

"I've a notion he's just sulking. Wants to get his farewell gifts and hates to come aboard after the way he acted yesterday. He has sent some of his canoes away. So the lookout was right last night. They've probably gone back to the cone and their wives and families. I imagine they are the ones of least rank and will not share in the trade split if Tiburi gets over his sulks and tries to come aboard."

"Edwards has hurt his leg pretty badly, according to his own account," said Manning. "I saw him slip half-way down the companion and he claims to have sprained his ankle. He's got it painted with iodine and bandaged up now. He couldn't do more than hobble so I sent him to his bunk."

"Exit Edwards, for the time being. We won't get much more out of him this trip. Fong'll have to do double duty, but we can make it easier for him aft."

"He may be malingering," suggested Manning. "Or sulking, like Tiburi, after the call-down you gave him."

"We can get along without him," said Hooper. "We've got plenty to do between now and sailing-time. Neither Andersen nor Thompson is going to turn in until we get well away."

For two hours there was the bustle of departure, stowage of provisions, general overhauling, arrangement of a space on deck for Steiner and his fifteen men. The *Mary L.* would run back under her own power as long as the gasoline-supply lasted and Hooper, for humanitarian reasons as well as those of general comfort, decided to keep his quasi prisoners where they would get the full benefit of sun and air. A canvas awning was rigged from foremast to forestay for their convenience.

Hooper had expected some last gifts of fresh fruit and fish from Tiburi, but as eleven o'clcok came and the chief still remained within the crater, sequestered on his little beach, he resolved to do without them. The dynamite, with several of the sticks halved, primed and fused, was still in the stern of one of the two whale-boats and there was a chance of getting mullet at the last moment.

On the terrace Steiner and his fifteen men were under guard of Holabird, White, Ryder and Smith. The boats would be full coming back and Hooper did not want to make two trips of the job. Andersen was left in charge of the schooner, with Thompson and Manning's three assistants under him. There were also Fong and Ling and the invalided Edwards with his sprained ankle. It was a strong outfit. Four sailors went in each boat as rowers, Manning, who could handle a steering-sweep, in the stern of one, Hooper in that of the other.

Again they passed Tiburi's canoes drawn up on the beach and again the savages came down to the water's edge and watched them. But Tiburi was not visible. His wounded dignity seemed to demand that he keep in seclusion.

"He'll come round at the last minute," said Hooper. "He'll guess we are going out on the ebb, once he sees us transporting Steiner and his crowd. We haven't seen the last of Tiburi. Not while there is any trade left aboard the schooner."

It was about three-quarters of a mile from the crater-gap across the inner lagoon to the landing below the terrace. Usually the guards came to the bottom of the stairways to meet the incoming boats. Two guarded each trail. They were not visible and Hooper, in the leading boat, gave the order to hold water until Manning drew up.

"Funny," he said, screwing his eyes up at the terrace. "There's no one in sight."

"Back in the caves," suggested Manning. "Or maybe Steiner balked at the last minute and our men are rounding them up."

"Soon find out," replied Hooper. "Give way, men."

They bent to the oars and the boats glided into a narrow channel that led right through the strip of beach to the largest of the water-caves. This channel bore evidence of having been man-made and the landing-ledges inside the caves were too handy to have been entirely accidental. One man was left in each boat, still afloat inside the cave, and the party divided, Manning going to the left with his three men and Hooper to the right with his.

Nothing was said, action preempting words, but the impression that something had gone askew in the arrangements, that the terrace was deserted, manifested itself, not only to Hooper and Manning, but in the sailors. The whole party was armed, as usual, with rifles and automatics. At the last moment, Manning, on impulse prompted by the strange silence of the place, carried up with him the box of dynamite.

He thought it possible that Steiner and his men had retreated to some position in the caves back of the images where they could make a resistance. Or better terms. They might have overpowered their guards. He had never underestimated Steiner and the men had been warned to be careful.

The two parties reached the level of the terrace simultaneously. Manning, peering about the pedestal of a god, pistol ready, saw Hooper's face rising from the trail at the other end. The terrace was deserted. The cooking-utensils that Steiner had been given for his party were in orderly array, ready for transshipment. So were the blankets and a bundle or two of general dunnage. But no sign of Steiner, his men or of the four guards. Only silence, broken by the low plashing of the lagoon surf on the landing-beach and the steady dripping of water from the main cave. The grass-thatched shelters were empty.

There were five caves, but four of these were only gas-blow fissures in the lava rock, two of them too narrow for a man easily to squeeze through. All these they probed and examined after a preliminary search of the big cave. That was a bewildering labyrinth in its interior. It seemed foolish to think that Steiner had hidden in its depths. He would have but the smallest supply of food and water, if any, and two men could effectually prevent any exit. Unless he figured that the schooner would sail away after Hooper and Manning had grown tired of waiting, leaving their four men. Which was equally ridiculous. And would leave Steiner within a short time at the mercy of Tiburi once again.

They gathered on the terrace, uncertain, perplexed.

"Do you suppose they have discovered some passage leading up and out on the slopes?" Hooper asked Manning. "That would only take them out of our frying-pan into Tiburi's fire."

"If there was one, Tiburi would have known of it and attacked them that way long ago, when you first came here," objected the diver.

"Perhaps he did. We don't know the details of how he finally did get Steiner. I don't like it. And I don't quite see what to do. We can't leave the men. We can't leave Steiner to be put in that stockade again. Confound the man, what's he up to?"

His glance ranged seaward to where they could see the schooner between the reefs, through the gap in the crater walls.

"Something doing on the beach with Tiburi," he said. "They're launching the canoes. And they've got all their weapons with them. They've been leaving most of them behind of late. Manning, there's something stirring that looks fishy to me."

"Steiner and Tiburi in together. That wouldn't——"

"It's Tiburi anyway," said Hooper. "Look at them come. Not for the schooner, but after us. They saw us go in and they are not going to let us out."

The canoes were forming in line across the inner lagoon. As they gazed from the terrace they saw them take order and the spray flash from the paddles and surge before the prows as they came on at top speed. The canoes fairly bristled with weapons.

"Better tackle 'em here than try to break through them in the boats," said Hooper.

Manning looked at him from a new angle of respect. Only once had he seen Hooper in the offensive, when he knocked down Holabird. And the conviction was borne in upon him that Holabird was mixed up in this somehow, with Edwards, for all the latter's lame ankle. Treachery!

NOW Hooper's face was a fighting-mask, set, lips firm, jaws clenched, the lower jutting out in determination, his nostrils wide and his eyes ablaze. Manning did not realize that his own features were a replica of his friend's.

He saw the folly of trying to run the gantlet against so many canoes, able to move three times as easily, as swiftly; crowded with men who could quill them with arrows in one discharge.

The two sailors left in charge of the boats came hurrying up the trail, their faces showing their alarm.

"There are the rest of Tiburi's canoes, out to sea," cried Hooper. "Going to tackle the schooner. They'll have a tough time of it."

"Tiburi seems to have got over his fear of the Hims all right," said Manning grimly as he examined the breech of his rifle and the clip of his automatic, half-fearful that they had been in some way tampered with. "But we'll put the fear of Us into him before he gets through."

Hooper nodded.

"Steady, men," he rallied the sailors. "We can hold them off from the heads of the trails. Manning, you take the left, will you? Don't waste a shot, any one of you."

Two of the men suddenly shrank back to the wall of the cliff, pointing upward, their faces gray under the tan. Savage yells broke out from above. Arrows rained down, glancing and shivering on the stone flags. Leaping through the bush down the steep sides of the crater came two score or more tribesmen, brandishing spears and clubs, disappearing behind the leafy screen to discharge more arrows.

Their deafening, triumphant din was echoed from the lagoon where Tiburi and his men, the chief's war-canoe in the center of the cannibal armada, were closing in for the beach at terrific speed. The whites were caught between two attacks. A third was closing on the schooner. White puffs of smoke showed on her decks; the reports of rifles came floating back to the terrace.

Then, from the water-cave beneath, out darted the two whale-boats, filled with Steiner and his men, rowing fast toward Tiburi. Holabird and the three other guards were with them, not as prisoners, but free, a part of the crowd, with their weapons. They turned and yelled defiance at the terrace. Tiburi's flotilla parted to let them through and they sped on toward the schooner, the oars pulled by the German sailors. Tiburi's savages yelled greetings to them as they passed. The whole attack had been deliberately planned and timed. Steiner, Tiburi and the four guards were in collusion for common advantages. Edwards too, in all probability, but he had funked the fight at the last minute.

"Why doesn't Andersen put to sea?" cried Hooper. "He can come back for us."

And then the men from the cliffs were upon them, leaping down on the terrace, yelling like so many demons from the pit; stark naked, save for ornaments, their filed teeth showing between their thick lips, drawn back in eagerness; their eyeballs flashing as they rushed wildly to hand-grips with the whites.

Some of them fell before the first fire. The fight became a mêlée in which the savages had an advantage with their weapons made for hand-to-hand combat, clubs of hardwood beaked with stone and shell; their skill and strength in handling them. The sailors were beaten back, Hooper and Manning in the front rank, making every shot of their pistols count in the desperate fight. They had none too many bullets. In a few moments the main attack would land from the canoes, rushing up at their backs, hewing, stabbing, spearing.

Manning flung his empty automatic into the open mouth of a warrior, breaking his teeth and spoiling the blow he was whirling down. He clubbed his rifle and used it as a flail, smashing furiously with Hooper beside him. The attack was so furious that the cannibals blocked themselves by their packed formation but sheer weight told and several of the men were bleeding.

A warrior sprang out and clung to Hooper's uplifted arms, swinging his rifle. Another thrust at him with a spear that bristled with sharks' teeth and was tipped with shell. Manning's rifle-butt came down upon the skull of the second and shattered it like a pumpkin, spattering blood and brains. As the blow landed a savage sprang on him with a war-club and Manning kicked him in the knee, bringing him down with a howl of rage, clasping at Manning's legs, dragging the white man down asprawl.

Manning still clutched his rifle in one hand; the warrior was beneath him, striving to twist uppermost while Manning sought his throat with his left hand. Then weight sagged him, twining limbs imprisoned his. He was helpless, waiting for the final blow like a trussed ox—unless they were after him alive!

That thought shot through him in a lightning-flash. Then the strenuous pressure above and about relaxed. He heaved up. A hand caught him by the elbow and he stood erect. Three of the sailors were down. Hooper, bloody but smiling, was beside him. Manning's first opponent lay with his face formless, bashed in by the butt of Hooper's gun—another swung an arm broken at the elbow.

"Even," said Hooper, panting.

"Rush 'em—dynamite! Rush 'em a bit!" gasped Manning.

Hooper gave him a look that swiftly lightened as he took in the meaning.

With a yell that outtopped any native whoop, that carried terror in its deep-throated heartiness, Hooper jumped at the massed ranks of the savages, embarrassed by their own numbers, amazed at the resistance of these hard-fighting whites. The sailors still on their feet, desperate, maddened by the trap that they were in, followed their leader and the mob gave sullenly back, a foot—a yard—two more, past the base of the biggest statue that leaned on its pedestal out above the cliff.

Beside it Manning had set down his precious box of explosives. As the natives stiffened, taking fresh heart at the yells that came up from below, as the canoes made a dash for the last fifty yards between them and the beach, he snatched out some of the half-sticks that were ready-primed. He found his matches, lighted the ruffled fuses, blowing at them.

"Back!" he roared. "Come back!"

Facing the savages, Hooper pressed back his sailors, stumbling over the dead and wounded.

"Take cover!" shouted Manning, and they leaped aside behind the pedestals, into the main cave, while Manning flung two grenades into the thick of the astounded savages and crouched back of the base of the great god, hurriedly stuffing into a crevice more of the prepared dynamite.

With a roar and a burst of flame the explosive detonated. The wail of the stricken cannibals, blown up, crisped, torn apart, those unharmed flung flat while the noise of the blast resounded from the cliff, was merged in a second storm of thundering noise and darting lightnings. Manning, racing for cover, was flung down, stunned as the terrace shook, the base of the great god rocked, the statue toppled and went hurtling down.

It crashed fairly into the clutter of landing canoes, half in the water, half on the beach, splintering Tiburi's own craft, the crown one missile, the body and the pedestal two thunderbolts that crushed bodies to pulp and turned the peaceful tide crimson.

XII

LAND, sea and air still shook under the tremendous force of the exploding gases. The savages who had attacked the terrace and had survived the explosion were scrambling frantically back up the cliffs to safety, leaving their broken dead and writhing wounded behind them. Tiburi was dead, with a score of his followers. The survivors were swimming frantically off or had crowded into a few canoes that had not been badly damaged, many clinging to the gunwales and outriggers as the paddlers strove to get away from this place of utter disaster and the outbreak of the wrath of the gods.

For surely this was a thing of the gods, the gods of the white men! The tribe had long worshiped those enormous images, especially the central figure. It had meant nothing to them of actual creed, it held no actual place in their polytheistic pantheon but they knew it to be the likeness of a god and of a great god. Now it had been overthrown in fire and flame, involving them in its destruction, coming to the rescue of the whites. For they could see the whites still moving on the terrace; and had not one of them flung thundering, fiery death among them?

They held no desire but to flee. Never again on that island would the magic of the white man be questioned or his purposes thwarted. Yet Steiner had been white and he had been their ally. But he had also been their prisoner, therefore there were white men who were at odds with the gods and others high in favor. But it would behoove them for the future to hold all white strangers in awe.

Out at sea the savages had heard the roar and seen the flame, the fragments of tossed rock and masses of toppling cliff and statues. And their canoes had vanished toward the safety of their cone and the deep bush.

Hooper rushed out before the dust had settled, bounding from the cave where he had sought cover at Manning's shout, hurrying to pick up his comrade and partner, fearing that he had sacrificed himself to save the rest.

Manning had seized a handful of dynamite-sticks at the last moment, stuffing fuse and primers in his pocket. The bulk of the explosive, still in its box, he had kicked over the cliff before he sought safety, after lighting the fuses. From the frightful force of the discharge it seemed certain that this too had detonated. The blocks on the terrace were displaced as if by an earthquake, the cliff below was rent and fissured; every god had fallen from its pedestal, though only the one had toppled over the cliff. A great wave formed, rolling in and then retreating in a surge that bore the whole and broken canoes away with their riding, clinging freight, in confusion.

Manning, in falling, or perhaps before he fell, had rolled the dozen sticks of dynamite along the terrace ahead of him. The force of the explosion, expending itself in the direction of the greatest resistance, had, with the freakishness of nitro-glycerine, sent out lateral blasts of gas and air that had floored Manning but had left the scattered sticks immune, saving his life and also leaving a weapon of deadly offense if any were still needed. For, with the exception of a few shells in the magazines of their rifles, they had used all their ammunition.

Manning, with his swift purpose and action, doing the only thing that could have saved them from the horde, risking his own life without thought or fear, had not been killed. The explosion had stunned him, flinging him headlong. The stone flags had met his head violently, his face was a bloody mask, the clothes had been torn from his back; but Hooper, as he raised him, saw that he was still breathing, heard him groan, and thanked God.

A sailor ran with water from the cave and tossed it on the face of the unconscious man, racing back for more with which Hooper, taking his friend's head upon his lap, bathed the bruised features and at last saw Manning's eyes open intelligent, still indomitable with purpose. He smiled up at Hooper.

"Close call—touch and go," he said faintly. "You're safe. How about——?"

"We're all safe," said Hooper huskily. "Thanks to you and your confounded foolhardiness. You might have blown yourself to atoms!"

His chiding was full of deep affection, of admiration, and it acted like a tonic on Manning.

"You've scattered them to the four winds," said Hooper. "Those who have legs left and arms to swim or paddle with are using them. It's the end of Tiburi."

"The schooner?" asked Manning.

He got up with anxious aid of Hooper, bathing his face, which still bled freely.

"I'm sound," he said. "No bones broken. Feel as if I'd been pounded by a hundred war-clubs at once. Ah, they're holding them off. Good men!"

Rifles were spitting from the deck of the *Mary L.* answered from the two whale-boats in less measure. Steiner had only the guns and pistols of the four treacherous guards and, deserted by his savage allies, his attack was failing. One or two of his men in each boat seemed to have been badly wounded, if not killed, to judge by their postures.

"Got to get out there," said Hooper. "It's a problem. Three of our chaps are pretty badly slashed and clubbed. Dragged them into the cave when you started the fireworks. That was quick thinking, Manning.

"We'd have hard work getting around the crater-slopes," he said, "and we'd have to swim for it at the last. There seems something wrong with the schooner's engine. Otherwise I believe Andersen would have put out to sea to shake off that attack. Anyway they can't come in through the second reef. Steiner's got both our boats. Don't imagine there's anything left in the shape of a canoe. But there might be."

He sent a sailor down to the beach to look and the man came hurrying back with a shout. The big wave had washed two canoes fairly inside the cave and they were in fair shape. The dazed savages had been too literally swept off their feet to think of such a happening. They were still paddling off to the shore at a safe distance from these white men and their gods, who might again blast them. The lagoon was dotted with the heads of swimmers.

In the two canoes they took up the paddles, Hooper and Manning assisting to take the place of the three wounded sailors. Manning protested that he was whole and did not want to get stiff and Hooper's heart lightened as he saw the diver stroking lustily. Salt water had proved an astringent for the abrasions of his face though the superficial wounds gave him a grim and ghastly appearance.

As they neared the reef two men in each canoe paddled while the others took up the rifles and the two partners prepared their dynamite grenades in case Steiner might come to close quarters. But Steiner had seen that he was beaten. To be left behind was now his great fear, or that of his men. The savages, recovering from their shock, would take vengeance. Before they got within true hailing-distance his followers were shouting and waving their hands to announce their surrender.

"Hear that?" called Hooper from his canoe across to Manning in the other. "*Kamerad!* Wouldn't wonder if they got that out of the papers!"

Manning nodded back. He saw Steiner, still sullen, but overborne by his men. He saw two of the guards protesting and then silenced.

White and Smith? The two names took on sudden illumination. Weiss and Schmidt, undoubtedly. Ryder too sounded Germanic.

As for Holabird, he had been won over by the talk of Edwards, the thought of gain. It was exceedingly plain that these four men had been shipped by the too slick Edwards for a previously understood purpose.

The attempt to cozen the sailors to mutiny having failed, Edwards, with his tricks of magic, his knowledge of dialects, had seen his chance to win over Tiburi, to effect a junction with Steiner; a partnership to be variously apportioned its rewards. And they had accorded him full facility. He had taken off provisions to the terrace, his four men were in daily contact with Steiner, Edwards had had ample opportunities to cement the alliance with Tiburi. And he had overcome Tiburi's fear of the Hims. How, was not yet plain.

Edwards had faked his ankle to remain on board and put the engine out of commission. It was not cowardice that kept him there. Perhaps—Manning remembered the wireless incident—perhaps the chapter was not yet quite closed.

HOOPER steered straight for the schooner and Manning followed. All firing had ceased from the whaleboats. The men in them hung on their oars, looking anxiously toward the *Mary L.*, debating their fate, dreading to be left behind.

Andersen and Thompson met them at the gangway. Manning's assistants carried the wounded men below. They had been temporarily patched up and none of them appeared seriously wounded beyond ultimate recovery.

"We held them off, sir," said Andersen. "One or two flesh-wounds, but we potted some of them. And now they've quit. Afraid you were blown up till we made you out in the canoes. Goin' to leave them here where they belong, on No Man's Island?"

He jerked a thumb toward the two boats.

"No," said Hooper. "They'll come along. We need the boats, for one thing. Were you trying to stand by, Andersen, or is the engine out of commission?"

"That sly devil, Edwards, did something to it," put in Thompson. "Ling's overhauling it now to find out the trouble. And Edwards was monkeying with the wireless."

"I thought so," said Manning.

Hooper glanced at his partner with raised eyebrows that bore a mute apology.

"Fong had the right dope, Manning," he said. Then to Thompson, "Where is he?"

"In his bunk. Fong sliced him up pretty badly and now he's trying to keep him alive till you talk with him."

"I'll go see him," said Hooper. "Coming, Manning? Andersen, let those chaps in the boats stew for a while. If they start to show fight, settle it. They won't run away, I fancy. And the natives won't bother us any more. Soon as Ling gets the engine fixed, let me know. Want to come along, Thompson?"

They found Edwards in his bunk. It was plain to see that he was dying. His eyes were closed and his face waxen. Fong sat beside him, sphinx-like. Hooper felt the faint pulse.

"Almost gone," he said. "What happened, Fong?"

"After you go," said Fong, "Ling, he find him at wi'less. Lang think that funny. Edwa'd he speak his foot plenty betteh. Ling speak why fo' he touch wi'less? Edwa'd say that none of Ling business. He speak maybe we want use wi'less. Ling, he come to my galley.

"Bimeby native come in canoe, two boat come with Steineh. Big fight look like begin. Andersen, he speak staht engine. Engine no good. I sabby plenty that Edwa'd he fixee. On deck, plenty gun go off. Same from boat. I find Edwa'd sneakee along in cabin. He open po't, makee signal. He try shoot me. This time he not so —— slick. He had gun, I have knife. All right, gun no good. Knife plenty good. So!"

He drew his forefinger across his abdomen with an eloquent gesture.

"Pretty soon he die," he said.

"Fong, go and get my medicine-chest," said Hooper. "I'll try and bring him back," he went on to Manning and Thompson when the Chinaman had gone. "We've got to get to the bottom of this."

He gave Edwards a hypodermic and presently the lax figure stirred wearily and the eyes opened. Manning gave the steward a sip of gin. Luster came into the dull eyes.

"You've done your worst, Edwards," said Hooper, "and you've lost out. You're going yourself. I don't want to torture you. I can't save you. Do you want to carry this thing on with you—to wherever you are going—or do you want to try and square things a bit?"

The dying man lay motionless except for the slight movement of his eyes.

"I'll tell you some things, while I last," he said finally. His voice was low, his speech jerky but intelligent and he was evidently striving to conserve his strength. Nor could there be doubt of his final earnestness or the truth of what he said.

"Butler. Had me—where he wanted me. Knew you had something, perhaps guano, perhaps pearls. Got me to ship with four *lunas*—all work for Butler. He got them jobs as *lunas*. That schooner *Seamew*—not Huddersleigh's. Belongs to Butler. Has wireless. Butler aboard her. Soon as you started engine and set straight course, I sent message. She followed. Now two hundred miles away. I sent another message—today, telling what happened. I thought we'd win for sure."

He paused for a while and they thought he had passed but he rallied again.

"I think—at first—when find out what you were after—get crew to join with my four men—take possession, send message for *Sewmew* to come. Crew did not join. You were too strong. I talk with Steiner and Tiburi. Tiburi to have everything in traderoom, many things from this ship. Steiner and men to take *Mary L.* for their share. Butler to take me and my men along—with pearls. Big money for us—pearls for Butler—and he destroy evidence against me he holds."

"And us, if we were not killed? What of us?"

"Butler would say."

"How did you manage to make Tiburi not afraid of the Hims?" asked Manning.

Edwards' eyelids were fluttering; he was at the last ebb of life. He opened his eyes again and there was the ghost of a twinkle in them as they bent to hear the whisper that was his last breath.

"Showed—him diving-suit—empty—in your cabin," he said.

THE *Mary L.*, her engine working again, stood north and west to meet the summoned *Seamew*. Edwards had not tried permanently to destroy the engine, by agreement doubtless with Steiner. He had broken ignition wires in the insulation which, once located, were easily replaced.

Behind the schooner towed the two whaleboats with Steiner and his followers. The dead had been buried at sea. Among them were Holabird and White—or Weiss—shot from the deck of the *Mary L.* Edwards went with them to their deep-sea graves.

At nightfall the prisoners were brought aboard and put in the forecastle, with the hatch secured. Dawn should show them the *Seamew* with Butler aboard, coming up for his triumph. That he had not calculated upon such a fighting termination of the trip was no excuse for his planning of it, yet it was doubtful if he could be found responsible. He was wealthy and powerful. He could easily disclaim any knowledge of the German prisoners; he could throw the blame upon Edwards and discredit what Ryder and Smith, who had received their orders direct from Edwards, might testify.

Edwards' confession was only oral. It would not hold for much in any court. Clever lawyers could bar its admission without trouble.

But Hooper and Manning, talking these things over, were not disposed to let the matter end in such fashion. To get Butler aboard the *Mary L.* was the big problem. He would expect communication by wireless and none of them could operate. Edwards might have agreed upon some signal which he had failed to communicate on his death-bed. Butler would probably scrutinize closely the decks of the *Mary L.* when the two vessels got close, certain as he might be from Edwards' message when the fight was on that everything had gone well for his side. Yet he would be careful.

In mid-morning they sighted the *Seamew*, coming up under power. The combined speed of the two vessels swiftly reduced the distance. And then Hooper displayed a signal. He had decided to take the chance that Edwards had not sent a detailed message and had not mentioned the fact that the crew had failed to join the conspiracy. At the time of sending the combined attack appeared invincible. Hooper, Manning and the sailors were cooped up on the terrace, the canoes were closing in. And Edwards had counted his chickens before the shells were fairly cracked. But Butler would be cautious.

Only three sailors showed on deck of the *Mary L.* One at the wheel. Her ensign was at half-mast; the signal-halyards showed this fluttering appeal—

"Send medical assistance."

"I figure there's no doctor aboard the *Seamew*," said Hooper. "Butler will think there are badly wounded aboard. He will imagine Edwards himself hurt. And it may bring him off. It may not. If he doesn't bite, we'll make for Honolulu and wait his return."

The *Seamew* came up, slowed down within speaking-distance. An officer appeared with a megaphone.

"What's the trouble?" he shouted. A sailor, coached for the occasion by Hooper, who, with Thompson and Manning, stood under the hood of the companionway unseen, answered:

"*Seamew* ahoy! Send some one to dress wounds."

Another figure appeared beside the first on the after deck of the *Seamew*. He did not turn his full face toward the *Mary L.* but they recognized Butler, in blue serge with the peak of his cap well down. The two consulted.

"Who's in charge?" called the officer.

"Mr. Edwards, sir. He was badly hurt. Wants to see Mr. Butler. Think he's dying, sir."

There was another consulation and then, with the *Mary L.'s* way stopped, the two schooners drifting slowly closer, a boat put out from the *Seamew* and the trio on the companion ladder rejoiced.

Manning and Hooper received the astounded Butler in the after cabin, emerging from the staterooms after he was seated. The interview was short and to the point.

"I know nothing of all this," declared Butler. "Edwards had no instructions from me. I was going to Fanning's Island on my own business. That can be shown. I picked up a wireless message that interested me. Cruising farther south, I got another. It was evidently a part of some infernal conspiracy hatched up by you men to attempt to implicate me. You tried to get me interested in some wild scheme in Honolulu, Hooper, if you are Hooper. I didn't fall for it and you cooked this up. Edwards was doubtless in it."

The man's cool effrontery was matchless. But Hooper only laughed.

"We fancied you'd deny it all, Mr. Butler. But we could put a pretty good case together, I think. Let's talk business."

Butler considered a moment with frowning brows.

"What is your proposition?" he asked.

"We've talked it over, Mr. Manning and myself. I want to make you a sleeping partner in this enterprise of ours, which was to recover the pearls out of my own schooner. We've got the pearls—got them all. But the schooner is a loss. And the expenses were heavy."

"Where are your pearls?"

"As a sleeping partner, you will not awaken sufficiently to partake of the profits," said Hooper smoothly. "We may show them to you. But we feel that you should reimburse us for the costs of this voyage and for the loss of the schooner."

"You are a lot of —— pirates!" burst out Butler. "I'll see you hanged first."

"As you like," said Hooper. "But, if you will give us a check for ten thousand dollars, release the bonds against the *Mary L.* and turn over to Mr. Manning and myself the *Seamew* as a testimonial of your esteem, we will consider the incident closed. We have no especial desire to be tied up in Honolulu, as you might be able to do. We are not pirates or we might maroon you. Edwards has paid the penalty. As things turned out he went farther than you intended. But—we are prepared to spend half of what we have recovered in pinning this thing to you—and we think we can do it. We have witnesses and a good deal of evidence when it is summed up. It is up to you. You may have to pay Ryder and Smith to hold their tongues. No one of us is seriously injured or we would not compound."

There was silence in the cabin for several minutes.

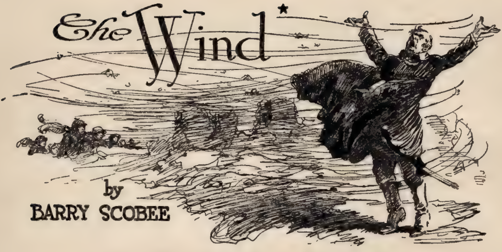
"You'll supplement that check with a note promising not to have it estopped," said Hooper. "I am beginning to doubt whether the amount is large enough, after all. And include a bill of sale for the *Seamew*."

"It's plain blackmail," said Butler, "but I'll submit to it."

"Thought you would," answered Hooper. "Fong, bring some refreshments."

"Piracy," said Butler once more, later, when the deal had been completed in the cabin of the *Seamew*.

"Finance," said Manning. "Never could see much difference between the two myself."



The Wind*

by BARRY SCOBEE

Author of "The Rawhiders," "Trail of the Chosen Four," etc.

I THINK I grunted. The sight was sufficient, at least, to startle me. For it was no more nor less than Captain Zachary Thorm zigzagging toward the hotel in the wicked tugging wind and laughing great roaring guffaws to himself. I could not hear the laughter for the wind, but I saw his movements and his wild face. And in the second instant I saw what he carried—a dressed pig, gripped by the hind legs, in each hand.

Pigs and laughter in that wind! My mouth went dry with fear and my nerves prickled.

Well they might. For as with the Flood forty days, so the wind had blown forty days and forty nights, until our mortal nerves were on edge. The burros, loafing to the leeward of the hotel, would start and run at a shoe-sole being smacked down on the boardwalk. And a burro appears to be the most stolid of animals. A ranchman dared not hitch up a team of horses, for their skins were sore to the harness from the hair being constantly blown and roughed. We were all victims of the ever shifting but never ending pressure.

I opened the door for Laughing Zach, and when he slipped hurriedly through I leaned my weight against it to close it on the wind. He swung up first one pig then the other and slammed them down across the dusty hotel register on the desk.

"Ho-ho-ho!" he roared mirthlessly, his eyes jumping everywhere. "John Simeon, I want a banquet cooked, a banquet for all the adults of the town, sir, do you hear? Tonight, tonight, tonight!"

"But—" I stammered in profound amazement, for Laughing Zach, though rich as Crœsus, was a recluse, the strange man of the village.

"Wad 'em into your dining-room until they pop out o' the windows!" he roared on, his eyes jumping from floor to chair, to wall, to desk, and back and forth like a cat. "I've a tale to tell 'em and a farewell to say, for I've a journey ahead o' me."

"A tale? A journey?" I repeated in my stupidity.

In a lifetime he had been no farther from the village than to ride over the near-by ranges buying cattle. In all my twenty years as his neighbor I had heard it whispered he feared to go beyond the horizon.

"A journey, yes," he confirmed. "And a tale with the March wind in it, and death and destruction and lost years—and pink pig to swallow it with. Ha-ha-ha!"

He chuckled up and down the scale with his empty mirth.

"But the wind, captain," I remonstrated. "The people won't come out. They're all half-daffy now."

A little of the madness left him and he looked at me in appeal.

"Herd 'em in—John—somehow. Get 'em in by hook or crook. I must have 'em here before I go, and go I must and go I will. You've been my friend, John. Listen, I'll sit at the head o' the board like an earl and we'll break bread and be merry, for tomorrow I go away. We'll talk and sing and I'll astonish 'em with a yarn."

---

* *This is an Off-the-Trail Story. See first contents page.*

"There is one yarn," I began. "I wonder——"

"Ah, landlord, that's it. Go out and tell 'em Captain Zachary Thorm, once o' the army, will spin the yarn that he can spin—the yarn Quincy Hodges has been daring me to spin for twenty years—or thirty years. Then they'll come. They'll come if the wind rises to blowing crags off the mountains."

"Zachary," I said, licensed by the friendship between us, "you'd better give up this—unusual idea and——"

"Nay, nay, you old botherer. Go out o' here and hire all the Mexicans who can cook food and all who can wait politely on table, and buy a coop o' fowls, and things in cans and barrels and boxes at the store; and get coffee and canisters o' tea and we'll have a feast to remember."

"I've nobody to send out to tell the people," I expostulated, still demurring, and on the last syllable thought of a messenger. "I might send Quincy, though."

"No other! He'll not fail to get 'em all, not he, a-hoppin' along on his metal foot."

"And will I ask Quincy in too?"

"Aye, everybody. Quincy too. All the he-gossips and the she-gossips to spread the news."

"Be careful of your talk," I advised.

"Careful! I bonded myself a quarter of a century ago, John, to talk now, to make restitution to certain dead men."

All at once he shuddered and his red, weather-beaten face paled a little. His eyes began to go again, and he threw back his head in the mirthless laughter. He broke in with a clumsy dance in his high-heel cow-country boots, and smacked a sheaf of bills down on the desk.

"That's to pay for my night o' nights. My night o' nights with the wild wind setting the tune."

He started up a song in a broken bass—"Oh, I'm as happy as a bridegroom, a bridegroom, for on the morrow I go away, go away."

He flung open the door, then shoved it shut and turned back.

"Do you know what night it will be to-night, friend landlord?"

"The fortieth night of the wind. The babies know that."

"——, man! The mad regiment of cavalry and the dead soldiers, that other fortieth night——"

He began to sing horribly—

"When I was a young captain, a young captain, oh, when I was a young captain——"

He fled out into the wind crying laughter that was not laughter but the agony of a man who has not found that there is peace in God.

Not understanding his seclusion or his loud and mocking laughter and his fits of despondency and his silent lips, we half-laughed at him—never to his face—and called him Laughing Zach. Our friendship, his and mine, was only comparative. Sometimes he took a meal in my dining-room, or talked a minute at a time about some earlier day acquaintance, or mayhap I gave him a warm word at Christmas.

And then he had a curious habit that threw us together some in the Summer-time. In each June, when the southwest Texas weather had become cheery in the high mountains, he would come to my hotel and spend two weeks, pretending one season that he was visiting in Washington, D. C., another season that he was in Yellowstone Park, or possibly in New York, or London. All the time he would read books and pamphlets about the places and force the talk about them to me.

I tried to help him with his illusions—for I knew that he sometimes went to the top of Old Blue and spent a day to catch sight of a Southern Pacific train going from New Orleans to the Golden Coast, or from the far West to the mellow South. The trains, at that distance of fifteen miles or so from the mountain, could be seen for hours, like a passing ship from a headland. He wanted—he sort of itched to travel, and it was not in my heart to discourage his make-believe. But he never talked about the dark thing that a few of the old gray heads hinted at.

And the banquet—I humored him. I carried the two pink pigs back to the old Mexican housekeeper, and laid long tables in the big barn of a dining-room and kindled a roaring fire in the mammoth fireplace.

WHEN Quincy Hodges came around with his twisted foot and metal brace and I told him what was in the air, he cocked one eye and looked at me hard.

"What's he aimin' to tell?" he asked curiously.

"None of my business," I said. "But if you're not going to take the stage out to the railroad today you might go around and tell the people. They'll appreciate it, having been cooped in at home so long."

"They'll 'preciate it," Quincy reiterated, "because ther'll be gossip their ears have been cocked for ever since—since it's been noticeable Thorm never leaves us—twenty years or so."

"You'll tell them?"

"Sure. I couldn't get out with the motor-truck in this wind. It'll stop a car on the crest of the Little Pass. I wonder——"

His eyes clouded; his crooked calloused hands fumbled each other.

"He won't back out, eh?"

But without waiting for an answer he got up and stood by the door an instant before opening it and passing into the gale.

"I'd trade my wages for a jug o' whisky."

That was the big fault with Quincy; he was always doing just that thing. The town had grown used to him on his "whisky nights," standing for hours at Laughing Zach's gate and baiting the captain in a loud voice to come out and talk and tell what he knew. They two had been soldiers together in that regiment of frontier cavalry that went mad in one wild, mad instant—Thorm a captain and Hodges a private. There was a secret between them that we knew nothing of and were afraid to guess at.

As the windy day wore on I saw Hodges going from house to house, bent against the gale, holding his battered hat on with first one hand, then the other, meantime warming the idle member in his trousers pocket. It seemed he would freeze, for the one button on his coat let the lapels blow back so that the acidy wind smote his breast. He had forgotten to wear the heavy coat that he used on the stage trips to the railroad.

The most we knew of Thorm was that he counted his cattle by the herds and his gold by the hatsful, and that he had not spent a night off his own mattress in thirty-one years. He would never venture beyond sight of the village church steeple. He would laugh his boisterous, evasive, courageous laugh and answer that he loved his own pillow best. But it only made the people whisper more that he feared the law or man or woman or mayhap God, somewhere beyond the horizon.

The captain's night was to begin with darkness. The sun went down in a clear and windy sky, with golden wisps of fleecy clouds scurrying over the far mountain-peaks. I saw an eagle that had been trying to fly against the west wind half the day to reach its cliff, still maneuvering. It would go high, high up, rest a while, then try to coast down, or drop as a plummet, but each time when it touched the surf of the wind blowing up from the cliff-face it was thrown aside to the eddies.

Quincy was the first to be there, except for two old ranchmen from the country. He found a place by the window where he could see the captain coming at the proper time, and established himself in brooding silence. The sun was no more than gone when the entire town seemed to come in together. I soon saw that every man and woman not under the doctor's tyranny was there. And a wind-worn lot they were.

The women talked in high, screeching voices and started or screamed smotheredly each time that a sheet of tin roofing over the corner where we sat, that had come loose that day, was lifted by the wind and thrown down with a bang.

Those women were haggard with the nerve-strain of the wind that blew and never ceased.

The men, with the dust of weeks driven into their skin and face-wrinkles, put in their time wondering if the gale would ever die, or recounting in snatches the known history of Thorm's career in that country. Only four of them all had been there longer than he. Also they talked of his big ranches and his shrewdness in buying the white-face cattle. Quincy broke his silence to mutter once—

"He ain't in sight yet."

Darkness covered the land. The two big front rooms were lighted. Steaming platters were set upon the white linen. I began unconsciously to listen for Thorm's wild laughter. The men walked the floor. Everybody grew restless with the waiting. Then a woman said querulously—

"Won't he never come?"

Upon the echo of her question the door flung open and Laughing Zach plunged in.

"—— and ——" he roared, the terror of the morning still a-hold of him. "Won't it never stop?"

He glared around, realized us, and a change came over him. He magically revealed a new man to us in himself. He threw back an ancient blue military cape, displaying the yellow lining of the cavalry, a bright jangling sword and the blue dress uniform with the wide stripe of a captain at the trouser seams—all time-stained and crease-worn.

But it was his face we watched. It changed to a benevolent countenance, with a beaming kindliness, and his gray eyes softened and filled with tears—the first tears I warrant that had flooded his lids in thirty years. Then he brightened more.

"Welcome, each and every one of you," he cried out. "Welcome, neighbors, to my farewell dinner!"

He spread out his great arms and herded us toward the dining-room. Quincy, to avoid being touched by the shepherding arm, shoved into the crowd and got ahead.

The old soldier took his place at the head of the table, big and commanding, and directed us to our chairs. When his eyes glanced around and found Hodges at the other end of the head table, opposite himself, he said—

"Ah!"

"Here big as life," leered Quincy. "Ears cleaned to hear your speech."

For the time that he could pick up a glass of water and set it down again without drinking, Laughing Zach was panicky. Then he spoke softly:

"Be peaceful, Quincy. My fellow townsmen have never broken bread with me in the thirty-one years. I—I wish them to before I go."

Hodges' answer was a rattling of his metal brace against a chair. But Thorm ignored him and beamed upon us again in the manner of a man proud to have his neighbors at his board. He jested and ran on with merry wit that astonished us, playing the olden earl indeed. At first, I tell you, we forgot ourselves and the wind that sucked and roared in the fireplace, in our marveling over this revelation of a man. Hodges mumbled and broke in, but somehow we did not pay him heed but basked in the cheer of our host.

It was the pent-up host desire of a quarter of a century that made him affable beyond belief. If we enjoyed it, and we did, I must say that our enjoyment was a dull occasion compared to the happiness that he extracted. Neighbors in to dinner. It was that to him, with all it meant to his starved friendliness. Neighbors! He thrilled over the word.

Everything fades but the love of God, and before we wanted it to be so the table was cleared and Captain Zachary Thorm faced that moment after dessert when a word, a speech, is next. The dread of the morning crept in again; his eyes began to dart.

"Afraid!" sneered the stage-driver.

"No!" and Zach's eyes came sharp up. "I've been in the clutch of dead men too long to fear the living."

Nevertheless, his words belied his actions, or his courage was of short duration, for again he ran the scale of his mirthless laughter; laughter that plucked at our nerves like an unseen hand in the dark and sent awful thrills across our fears.

Hodges jumped to his feet and pointed out a finger.

"What dead?" he demanded

Thorm did not answer. He gripped up a handful of table-cloth, unknowing, and with his right hand drew a folded document from an inside pocket. As he pressed it into my hands he bent to my ear and whispered—

"Give this to Quincy after I am gone."

"What dead?" Hodges demanded again, pounding on the table with his glass tumbler. "Tell 'em, Thorm, tell 'em! I've been waiting a lifetime to hear you talk. Name the dead, murderer!"

THORM extended a shaking arm in the direction of the old garrison, now adobe ruins, that lay a mile north of where we were assembled.

"I came here for that purpose, Hodges," he declared. "To name the dead, neighbors, that died that other time when the wind blew forty days and forty nights and a regiment of horse went mad."

Hodges shouted to the guests excitedly.

"You're hearing the straight of it! That other night—that other night."

"Thirty-one years ago, lacking a brace o' weeks," Thorm said. "I was to wait till the anniversary, but this fortieth night of the wind drove me on. The colonel——"

"That's it. Begin at the first. Don't skip," Hodges shouted.

"The colonel turned the regiment out of their beds at midnight in the midst of the wind to drill the recruits in hustling out for Indian attacks. The Mescalero Apaches—the wind——"

"Don't stammer! That wail. Explain that wail." Hodges hammered the table.

"We were wild with the wind," the old

officer went on, visibly collecting and holding his thought.

I nodded to a Mexican to throw more red oak into the fireplace. A woman emitted a long, quivering sigh and her husband stirred in sympathy. I myself felt that if Thorm didn't hurry along I should have to rise and pace the floor.

"That very day," he said at last, "was a climax of days. We saw an officer's wife put into the El Paso stage, destined for a sanitarium—her nerves shattered. The gales had howled up from the Coahuilan desert and down from the Staked Plains, a-chasing dust-clouds and pulling at our coats and screeching past the windows, until we couldn't think straight. No rain, no new people, no white-covered tables with sane women's eyes sparkling, no books, no silence—always the screech of the wind, cursing soldiers with grit kneaded into their skins, empty land, these black ruins of ancient mountains, a longing to be somewhere else, and all our days in a post made o' 'dobe—mud! Every man came to hate his neighbor——"

"You did!" Hodges blared out, and took up the tale himself. "Horses were tuned up tight as fiddle-strings. On this night the call to arms sounded, ragged and scary in that gale. We——"

"Tell it all, tell it all," admonished Thorm. "I was officer of the day and didn't have to assemble with you in response to the call. I was walking about at my night's inspection. I went to the telegraph office on the hillside above the parade-ground. I paced back and forth in the shelter and watched the regiment form."

"I was stable guard," Quincy took up the instant Thorm paused for breath. "I hurried to help my troop out, a-cursin' the colonel for soundin' the call on such a night. The men were as wild as the horses, and shouting oaths. At every oath and trumpet-blare the mounts would rear and lunge. I never saw a madder scene in any drunken dream. We got 'em after a while into some sort of line across the parade-ground. A——"

"I had been cursing department orders that kept me in such a hell," Zach broke in. "On my day's duty I let hate get hold o' my heart. There by the telegraph office I stood and cursed the uniform and the men, my comrades, and suddenly I hated the regiment. I hated myself. The idea——"

"Then a trumpeter sounded attention." Quincy went on with his thread of the tale.

Weaving a blanket, they were, between them, that was covering all of us in such suspense that we scarcely breathed. Zach was high in emotion, glorified by the fulfilment of confession, I thought; Hodges was remembering an old occasion that had stuck to him like a burr.

"Then a trumpeter sounded attention," Quincy hurried on, his eyes flaming with memory. "The line of horses straightened out, and for the snap of your finger they were quiet and still—no more motion than a dead man's breath. Thorm——"

"Tell it all," Thorm admonished. "I was officer of the day. I didn't have to assemble with you for this midnight drill. I had other duty. But I was idle for the moment and I paced back and forth by the telegraph officer, and cursed my comrades and the regiment. I watched the regiment form. It was a scene, there in the windy moonlight—horses milling, rearing—men shouting, bugles screaming—I cursed it all.

"The idea came to me that the earth ought to split open there on the parade-ground and let them all slip into hell. The thought crowded out my sense of logic. I think for a moment my mind was in eclipse. Then the line of horsemen straightened out and was as motionless as a dead man's breath."

"And a-twangin' like a fiddle-string ready to snap!" Hodges breathed.

"And then—then," Thorm said more gravely than ever, "a voice with the devil in it rose wild and high in a wicked and long-drawn call—the wail of a mad ghost in a graveyard."

"My mount began to quiver," said the old soldier of the line. "The horses gasped in their startled, wheezing breaths. As if to command they reared or turned or plunged—wild, and broken and scattered by that wail as a clod is crushed and scattered by your fingers."

"I know. I saw them," cried Thorm. "They plunged out of ranks. They began to run pell-mell. They collided with one another. I heard the impacts. I heard bones break. They trampled men. They plunged their riders and themselves into adobe walls, and against the great black boulders below the cliffs. Some horses missed these traps and got into the open range, dragging limp men from stirrups.

The tally o' dead men ran to twenty-eight."

"You're forgettin'!" Hodges flared. "You're forgettin' mention of the cripples." He stamped his metal brace upon the floor.

Thorm mopped his gray face with a fresh white handkerchief.

"You talk about goin' away," the stage-driver sneered. "Captain de Zentin was found with the dead."

"His horse plunged him to death in arm's reach of me," Zach confessed in his quavering old voice, broken now so that it tugged at our hearts. "I saw his white face turned upward in the moonlight."

"He was going away the next day, Thorm—de Zentin was. Him and his wife and two little girls that used to wear white frocks and blue ribbons. They were going to Omaha, where there would soon be green grass and civilization. It was his talk for a month beforehand. He commanded my company. And your shout killed him."

Thorm stammered that this was true—true.

"There was Forrest," Hodges went on relentlessly, leaning on his left hand upon the table and gesturing accusingly now and then with his right. "Forrest was a private in my troop. He'd been hoardin' to get money to go to Paris when his time was up—go to Paris and study art. He made pictures—good pictures of soldiers and wagons and Indians. They found him dragged lifeless on the rocks.

"Sergeant Francis, too. Tall and thin and straight and just. He was ordered to Fort Sam Houston, but there was an ordnance sergeant with a sick wife, and Francis stepped aside and let that other man go. But Francis was to go next—but they found him—trampled, loyal to duty, a-holding three bridle reins in each hand where he was trying to quiet the animals.

"All of them wanted to get away from that wind, Thorm, the same as you. This wind, this time, ain't so bad in forty days as it was then, because this is home to all you people. But them others are out there yet, Thorm, and you talk about leaving."

"Quincy," pleaded the captain. "Quincy."

"When the colonel couldn't find the man who cried out," Hodges went on, cruel now, it seemed, "he assembled what was still left on duty of the regiment and he went around to them and said God would reveal the man that caused the accident. He assembled 'em close by the hospital porch, Thorm, so some of the sounder sick and injured men could get out and be examined, too.

"Lookin' out of the hospital window I could see some of 'em—could see you. And when the colonel spoke to you, I knew you was the one. The colonel could have known too, if he hadn't been angry and, after all, misdoubtin' of God. But I saw and knew. Your eyes scringed."

"But I said then, Hodges," Thorm cried out in protest, "I said in that instant that I would make restitution—no, no, not that—would punish myself for my crime. I set myself the task of staying out here one year for each man who died, staying almost as close to my house as they were staying to the grave. Then I resolved to add three years more for the injured. And I have stayed. Now——"

THERE was silence for a little time until Hodges spoke.

"How you expecting to get to the railroad tomorrow?" Quincy demanded suspiciously.

"I have been depending on you going out, Quincy."

Hodges shook his head grimly. "I wouldn't go out in this wind for—even to get the doctor."

"Quincy," pleaded Thorm, forgetful of his audience, "you are the only man in town who has a car that can be put through the gale of Little Pass. You wouldn't disappoint me. It wouldn't do you any good. Quincy, man! I've stayed my thirty-one years."

A new voice spoke up. "I'll take you out," it said, "if you will go tonight. I think my car could make it through at night. The wind isn't so terrible then."

"No, no," Thorm protested. "I can't go tonight. When I promised myself I would give a banquet and assemble the people I said I would heap the measure full, like a bushel of oats heaped high and running over. I'll spend this night out there in the old fort among the graves of those I slew with——"

"That wail!" Hodges broke in.

"That wail!" Thorm broke out in agony, "When the wind blows the wail is in my ears. Always the wind and the wail. —— 'em! When the wind rattles my window it is the wail trying to get in and chill me. The wail and the wind and hell. It was the wind that drove me wild—that has——"

He paused, as if reminded of something his expression changed, and he shouted out in a new voice:

"But I am free now. Tomorrow I go away, away, away!"

In the silence that came as sweet music, a woman's voice asked gently—

"Where?"

"To Washington!" he thrilled. "To my country's capital. First to see the great domed structure, and the White House and Washington's monument, and all the rest of that great city. And I shall go to all the pleasant places of the world," he continued. "To Egypt to see the Sphinx that has been more patient than me, and to Rome and the Alps and to the Holy Land to see the Mount o' Calvary where—Good-by, my neighbors. Farewell, my friends. I go now for the vigil with those who stay behind."

Sobbing openly, Laughing Zach, the blusterer, took up his moth-eaten cape lined with yellow silk and strode from the room while we sat and thought after him.

When the front door closed behind him I rose and said quietly to the guests that I would follow after my friend to see that no harm of the night or the wind befell him. But when I was donning my overcoat in the front room Hodges joined me and said, grimly, that he would go also.

By the time we were wrapped for the outside, the crowd of guests had pushed into the front office. We slipped out and turned into the road. Captain Thorm was ahead, quite visible in the moonlight with his long cape blowing out ahead and seeming to wave and beckon to us to hurry on.

I love the wind. The prairie gales whispered in my ears when I was born and sang me to sleep in a sod house in my youth. In the northern Pacific seas the wind's drone has made me dream of castles in Spain, and I have breathed the breath of living life under its icy song in the Dakotas. I have listened to its maidenly enchantments on southern shores. It has sung of God, of Life, of Love. To me it is a musician who lends more ecstasy than a thousand harps can make me feel.

The love of the music of the wind has grown upon me with my graying hair and I have acquired the habit of walking abroad at night when the breezes stir, listening to the tales they whisper in the grass like waterfowl. So the paths were not difficult for me to follow as we kept after Laughing Zach.

He fought on steadily toward the old fort. Sometimes clouds of dust, sweeping along like the smoke of battle, came between us and once after a curtain had blown aside we saw the old officer running, as if he dared to lose no more of the night.

Presently he passed over the shoulder of the hill, beyond which was the ruin of the old mud garrison. He passed from our sight among great boulders of the desolate old camp ground.

Of a sudden Hodges clutched my arm and cried—

"What's that?"

His eyes were protruding, and he gazed back over the way we had come. For an instant I feared to turn my head—afraid of what I should see. When I mustered courage and turned, I beheld coming after us a procession, scattered out, garments waving in the wind. A troop of black and silent ghosts they seemed.

"The fools!" stormed my companion harshly. "Why couldn't they have stayed back?"

"A Roman holiday," I thought, then changed my opinion, for I had seen tears in their eyes back at table and knew their hearts were warm for the old man, their neighbor, in his hour of torment.

Quincy and I went on, not waiting, and made our way among the great black boulders on the hillside until we reached the spot where the old telegraph office had stood. A little of the adobe walls were still visible—but almost tramped flat by the footsteps of Time. It was best, we thought, for sake of the old officer's private vigil among the graves beyond, to go no farther. We were in a sufficiently commanding position to maintain a watchful eye in his behalf. We made out the flapping cape, here and there, as its owner wandered among the ruins in the white moonlight of the storm-blown night.

Somehow the journey reminded me of the wearied flight of the eagle—endless struggle. It almost seemed that I could make out the bird high above the cliffs.

As Hodges and I watched, the other guests assembled among the rocks behind us, leaning against the boulders or sitting on them or crouched in their shelter. Their white faces were turned in our direction; their dark garments flapped; they were silent. It was like a party of spirits, and I wished the light of day would come.

THORM kept on his winding course among the crumbling buildings, following the path perhaps that he had laid that night when this old army post was a living sentinel on the trail to Yuma. After a time we saw him pause as if stopped by a man at his side. Then he walked rapidly toward the old headquarters structure. He entered, was out of sight a minute, came out, ran toward the guardhouse. Before the little structure he gesticulated, and I was certain I caught a wisp of his voice on the wind.

"He's talking to the sergeant of the guard again, like he must have done that other night," Hodges whispered to me. "He's acting out that other night like a play."

Thorm walked away from the guardhouse, looking back as if watching the guard turn out and form. Then he began to stroll as officers of the day do. He turned out of the parade-ground, crossed a street, turned in back of officers' row. He passed behind the houses, was out of our sight for a while, then he appeared at the other end of the line and began to climb the hill toward us.

He found his journey difficult, for the wind-currents beat and eddied around the boulders with the wickedness of an ocean surf. He struggled up the hill, however, toward the telegraph office, stopping frequently to look out over the parade-ground.

"He sees the regiment forming," I said to my companion, who nodded.

Presently Thorm was between the dim trace of the telegraph office wall and the boulders, a short way beyond which we were half-concealed. He began to pace back and forth, vexedly, stopping each time at the end of his beat to look down into the quadrangular parade. He began to walk more rapidly, to look more sharply toward his vision of the confused troops. And all the while he muttered.

The white faces of the onlookers back of us never wavered.

Then for a full minute the captain gazed down below at the parade so full of life for him. He turned back, stooped as if peering into the window of the telegraph office—that had been gone for twenty years—and raising, glanced about in all directions.

"That wail was premeditated!" Quincy whispered excitedly.

"No," I said. "It is mad cunning, his caution. Look now how excited he is."

Thorm was glancing about, quick in his movements, tensed. Once more he looked down below. He seemed to see the regiment when the bugle brought the horses to a standstill. He raised up on his toes. He threw back his head and he gave voice to an unhuman scream that sent our scalps a-prickling as it droned away on the wind—high and undulating and weird, that scream of mental agony.

He watched, seeing again the panic he had wrought. Once he said in a low agitated and awed voice—

"Whoa! Whoa!"

Then one of the tragedies of that old night occurred again to him; and in a sudden shock of awakening and remorse he dropped to his knees in a praying-attitude and groaned and cried out in repentance.

When Quincy and I rose those faces behind us rose also and turned and went away. We went until we could catch only a wisp of his praying words now and then on the waves of the gale, and we waited until he was silent. When we stole back he was going down the hill, and we followed until he reached the graves of the twenty-eight, snugged away in a cove of Hospital Cañon.

He went to each mound and stood there a moment, sometimes speaking words as if in benediction. He kept on among them, strolling, pausing, until daylight was abroad, and even then showed no signs of leaving. That he might not see us, Quincy and I returned to the hotel.

There were embers still in the great fireplace that some settler before my day had built, and we sat down to thaw some of the chill from our bones. As we stretched our hands to the warmth I remembered the paper that Thorm had given me. Perhaps I was premature, but I passed it on to Hodges.

He read it and passed it back with a curious expression upon his face. When I looked I saw that it was a deed, properly executed, giving the Herd-o'-Mustangs ranch to Quincy Hodges. It was Thorm's greatest landholding.

AFTER that I dozed. I must have slept in that deep chair, for I started up at a confusion of sound. It was eight o'clock. There were voices and trampings in the office and on the porch. I hurried out and I found that a dozen of our townsmen—in truth all the men of the village not urgently occupied—had come out to bid Laughing Zach farewell.

"Will Quincy take him?" I asked, the first words I spoke.

In answer one of them pointed across the bare plaza to the garage, and there I saw Quincy starting our way with his mail-truck. In a moment he roared up to the hotel porch and stopped.

Presently we saw Thorm come from his house. We watched and speculated in low voices among ourselves while the old man came on, garbed now in the ordinary garments of a man ready to travel. As he drew nearer, Quincy shamefacedly busied himself at dusting off the cushions. I wondered if the deed was burning a hole in his coat pocket. Laughing Zach set foot upon the porch.

"A pleasant journey," I greeted.

He was calm now and he seemed to be enwrapped in a halo. He regarded us, then raised an arm and pointed off toward the old fort.

"I spent the night out there——"

He dropped his arm. He swallowed.

"I have decided that I shall not go when they must stay behind in their narrow beds. So I shall not be riding with you to the railroad, Quincy. But you are to keep the deed."

He bowed to us and turned on his heel.

"Wait!" Quincy cried. "How about Washington? Ain't you going to see the capital, Zachary?"

"Pooh!" Thorm snapped his fingers derisively. "A child's dreaming. Who wants to go to Washington?"

He threw back his head and laughed and it was the same laugh we had heard a thousand times. But we knew it now for a make-believe laugh that was trying courageously to hide his fondest dreaming.

"Zachary," said Quincy, to our surprize, "what's tellin' you to stay? Your conscience?"

"Yes," Thorm answered simply.

Hodges cranked his car thoughtfully, then he came up on the porch and he counted us and himself.

"Fourteen," he said. "Zachary, fourteen consciences know better what's right than one conscience."

"What do you mean?" Thorm questioned.

"I mean fourteen of us say you have paid long ago, and ought to go on your journey." Quincy faced us. "How about it, men?"

Our instantaneous answer was a growled, hearty "Yeah!"

Thorm thanked us with beaming eyes. He was grateful for that vote from his neighbors. But he stood flat and began to shake his head.

"You've paid a hundred times," Quincy urged, and seeing that the captain was not moved, he spoke to us again:

"Men, say good-by to Zachary if you want to. We'll be going."

Some of us took the hint and started it. We rushed up and began to shake hands with Laughing Zach and crowd him toward the roaring car. We literally hand-shook him into the seat beside Quincy. In fact there wasn't anything left for him but to take the word of the fourteen consciences and go.

"All right," he said huskily at last. "All right." He was glad, happily excited.

"Don't forget the trunk," I shouted to Hodges.

"Hang the trunk!" bawled the driver. "We got to hurry to catch the train, in this wind."

It had not occurred to me until then that the wind was starting on its forty-first day, high and hard.

With the Aid of the Spirits

by L. PATRICK GREENE

Author of "No Evidence," "The Man Who Stayed," etc.

WITHOUT doubt Nyanga the Chief was greatly angered and it was only by a mighty effort that he could restrain the torrent of invectives that rose to his lips. Somewhat of the fierceness of his passion showed in his scowling face. His eyes were almost hidden by the fatness of his cheeks but from them shone a baleful light that caused many of the warriors to think of death. His big hands opened and closed convulsively on a small assegai; the symbol of his rank, of his power of life and death.

Intya, if he noted these signs, heeded not the anger of the chief. His upright, soldierly carriage showed no sign of fear, no hint of homage.

"That is all, my uncle," he concluded at length. "My story is told."

For a short space Nyanga regarded him silently, his face working furiously. Suddenly he sprang to his feet with a lightness that was surprizing, considering his big bulk. His right hand, trembling with rage, held aloft the toy assegai with which he made a threatening gesture.

The captain of the bodyguard shouted a brief order and Intya was quickly surrounded by warriors.

The atmosphere was charged with death. No man moved or spoke, but all watched the chief's right hand, the hand which held the assegai—watching for the downward thrust and the words "take him away," which would be the signal for the assegais of the warriors to be plunged in the body of Intya.

Slowly Nyanga sank back on his seat and let the assegai fall from his hand. The captain of the bodyguard again grunted an order and the warriors released Intya, returning to their place behind the chief.

A gasp of relief came from the old men, the councilors, as all awaited for word from Nyanga.

"Dog," he panted, for he was very fat and the fierceness of his anger had brought him to the verge of apoplexy, "Dog, I have listened this long time to thee, hoping to find some signs of meekness, some respect for the traditions of my people. But thou hast none; thou art altogether a thing without shame. Aye, I listened to thee, in part, because thou art my brother's son; because thou art blood of my blood, and no man-child dwells in the shadow of my hut. But to what end have I listened? To hear thee sing the praises of the white men whom ye foolishly seek to ape.

"Thou sayest that the white men have won a great fight. Where then are the cattle they captured? Do their warriors rejoice because many captured maidens are added to their huts?"

Nyanga paused for breath, his bloodshot eyes peering continually from side to side.

"Such is not the manner of the white men

—to take the women prisoners. This was a white man's war," murmured Intya.

"A white man's war," scoffed the chief. "Is it then the white man's way to take the cattle and young men of their friends—aye, they called me a friend—but to leave untouched the cattle of their enemies?"

"They paid thee for the cattle, my uncle, and as for the warriors who went from this kraal, they went of their own accord and they too were paid."

Nyanga's anger burst forth anew.

"Thou art overglib of tongue," he snarled. "A poor price they paid for the cattle. Had they taken them as a gift I would have been as well paid."

"They paid the price ye asked, my uncle."

"They cheated me, I tell thee. They paid the price I asked, in truth, but to Marka—may the spirits spit on his soul—they gave double."

"They paid him what he asked, as they paid thee."

"Aye? Therein I say they dealt unjustly with me. How was I to know that the white men would pay whatever price I asked? Being ignorant of this, I say, they cheated me, paying the smaller price. Is it not so?" Nyanga appealed to his councilors.

"Aye, great chief," they answered. "Without doubt they are men of double-dealing; there is no truth in them."

"Hear ye the words of my people," continued Nyanga complacently. "They are all of one mind in this matter."

"It is thy mind, my uncle."

"Have a care, thou." Nyanga picked up the assegai and toyed with it. "Once before this was raised on high and because thou didst show no sign of fear it was cast aside. The next time thou wilt not so easily escape." He lapsed into a brief, moody silence.

"Where are my young bulls—the warriors who followed the spears of the white men?" Nyanga demanded suddenly. "Their women come every day asking for word of their men-folk. What can I answer them?"

"Many are in the land of the great spirits, O chief."

"Nay. It is not of them I ask. Of them word has been brought and we have sung their praises for they died in battle, glorifying my name. But the others; where are they? Nay, there is no need for thee to answer. They have become weaned from the customs of my people, seeking, in truth, to become white men; forgetting their skins are black. And thou—liar and ingrate that thou art—thou are one of them."

"Without doubt they will return anon, my uncle. As for the rest, I am no liar. The things I have told thee are true things."

"Again do I call thee a liar. Are then these white men gods? Nay, I know them to be of passions like unto ours. Yet thou sayest that thou dost serve a white man who can command the spirits. That if he give an order in this place it shall be heard a day's—nay, a twenty days' march away."

"I know not how it is, but it is a true thing."

Nyanga snorted.

"They have bewitched thee. Heed well, just this one chance I give thee, forgetting the shame that I, the chief, should plead with such a one as thou art. Wilt thou forsake the service of the white men and return to thy kraal?"

"It can not be, O chief. I have sworn an oath of allegiance. Twelve moons must I yet serve."

"Then go thy way and trouble me not further, and thy name shall become a thing of shame among the people."

"And what of Nada, thy daughter?"

"She is not for thee, save—see how merciful I am—thou canst pay the *lobella*, the marriage gift I ask."

"That I will do gladly. Had ye asked all that is mine I would gladly pay it."

"And what is thine?" Nyanga asked mildly.

"I am headman of the kraal that was my father's."

"Nay. Not so. Thou wert headman, it is true, but not so now.

"Juffa."

The captain of the bodyguard came forward.

'*Inkosi?*"

"Thou hast ever been faithful to me, scorning the ways of the white men. That ye may learn how the chief rewards those who are faithful do I make thee headman of the kraal that was Intya's and all that is in it is thine, unless so be Intya can pay me the *lobella* I ask." Nyanga smiled grimly.

"What then do ye ask "

"Restore to me my last dwelling-place—that is all."

"But what talk is this?"

"Nay, I speak not further. Now get ye

gone, before I order that ye be beaten from the kraal."

"It is an order," said Intya wonderingly, and walked slowly from the council-place.

AT THE gate of the stockade that encircled the kraal Intya was greeted by a slender, graceful maiden.

"*O-he!* Intya! Whither goest thou?"

"To the place of the white men. The sun no longer shines for me in this place."

"How sayest thou?" Nada cried in aggrieved tones. "Is not this the place of my dwelling?"

"Of a truth, but thou art not for me."

"What meanest thou? What said my father, the chief?"

"He will have none of me, nor will he consent to our wedding unless I pay him the *lobella* he demands."

"What then? Thou art rich. But perchance I have lost favor in thy sight."

He caught her fiercely to him.

"Thou knowest that is not so. All my wealth is as a thing of no moment compared to thee."

"Then why?"

He released her suddenly and his arms dropped to his side dejectedly.

"But I had forgotten. I have no wealth; less than the dogs am I. No longer am I headman. The chief, thy father, hath put another in my place."

"Ah, wo is us! But why hath he done thus?"

"Who shall say. Because I am in the service of the white men, perchance. Tell me, Nada, why is he so embittered against them?"

"Did he not say?"

"Some little he spoke of the cattle he had sold to the white men, receiving, he said, less than did Marka, the chief of the land to the south; that angered him."

"And that is all?"

"Save that he scorned me and others from this kraal who have entered the service of the white men. Yet there was a time when he held himself greatly honored that I, flesh of his flesh, had found favor in the eyes of the white men."

Intya proudly fingered the sergeant's stripes which adorned his sleeve and the medal on his chest.

"Then thou hast not heard of the great shame?"

"Nay. What is the story?"

"Look yonder and learn."

Intya looked over the broad expanse of *veld* that fronted the kraal. It was level as the palm of a man's hand. Thus by cutting down the trees and destroying the tangled forest growth had Nyanga and bygone chiefs insured themselves from surprize attacks. Intya turned to Nada—

"I can not read thy riddle, Nada."

"Canst see the ant-hills that were wont to stand at the edge of the bush-land yonder?"

She pointed across the clearing to where the jungle-growth began.

Intya looked, rubbed his eyes and looked again.

"Nay," he said at length, "they are not there. Who hath defiled the burial-place of the chiefs?"

"White men came to my father's kraal, O Intya. White men with guns drawn by many mules. The voice of the guns was as the mighty thunder and when they spoke, the ant-hills, the burial-place of the chiefs, and the one that was to have been my father's place when he leaves us to go to the spirits, vanished in a cloud of dust."

"Now know I what meant the chief by the words 'Return to me my resting-place and all shall be well.' That is the *lobella* I must pay for thee, Nada. But what hope of that? Alas, we are indeed undone!"

She clung tightly to him.

"At least I will marry none other," she said. "Hope still, O mighty one; perchance thou wilt yet find a way. Hast thou not the ears of the white men?"

"It is well thought of, maiden." A new hope filled Intya's voice. "They destroyed and they must repay. Now fare thee well for I must go. The camp of the white men is seven days' trek from here and already I have dallied too long. It would ill become me, Sergeant Intya of the Bretis So' Afri-an Polis, to be absen' 'out leaf."

The last words were spoken in English and Nada looked at him with a wonder as if he had uttered the wisdom of the universe.

SEVEN days later Intya arrived at Zamba where a gigantic aerodrome was in course of construction. Hundreds of natives, under the directions of white men, were busily at work clearing the land of the stunted bushes that had been overlooked when the bigger task was accomplished—the felling of mighty trees.

On the far side of the clearing was a group of huts, the headquarters of the white men, and to the left another and larger group, the quarters of the Native Police. Thitherward Intya directed his steps, unheedful of the toilers who shouted their greetings.

Only once he stopped, and that was to converse briefly with a squad of men who were rolling the ground in front of the aeroplane-shed with a clumsy native-made roller. They were men of his own tribe, and to them he gave news of the kraal. Then running quickly, for it wanted but an hour to sunset and he had much to do ere he reported for duty, he came to the hut which he shared with three other sergeants. Entering, he doffed his uniform and busied himself with removing the travel-stains, burnishing, until they shone like gold, the brass buttons and buckles of his uniform.

The bugle sounding the call "Fatigue parties—dismiss," found him still at his task; but before the last notes had died away Intya presented himself at the door of the hut before which floated a tattered flag. He saluted gravely, then passed into the hut.

"Sergeant Intya," he said, "returned from leave of absence begs to report for duty, sar."

Captain Moulter of the Royal Air Force nodded absently.

"Had scoff, sergeant?"

"Yes, sar."

"Then stay here; we may need you.

"So you see," Moulter continued the interrupted conversation with Barry, his lieutenant, "there's nothing we can do but change our plans and prepare a station at Marka's kraal instead of Nyanga's."

Barry groaned.

"That'll be hell, old chap. The country round there is as bad as or worse than it was at Ndola. It's thick with bloomin' ant-hills and—" He groaned again and Moulter echoed the groan.

They had first-hand information of the stupendous task the clearing of the ground for an aerodrome at Ndola had been; a task occupying nearly a thousand men seven weary months. Seven months' torture in the reek of jungle heat, totally devoid of the comforts of civilization; the work of removing myriads of ant-hills—ant-hills measuring all of twenty-five feet high, each containing tons of earth.

And Marka's was even worse, Barry said.

"Isn't there any way we can force Fatty—" this was Barry's name for Nyanga—"to come to terms?"

"Not as I see it. The old chap thinks that he has been cheated somehow and won't have anything to do with us. He says that we can't fly and if we can it's because we are in league with the devil, and evil is sure to come of it. But there's some other reason, and I suspect if we could find out what he meant by 'restore my last resting-place,' everything in the garden 'ud be lovely. But not a word could I get out of him, or any one else, as to what he was driving at."

"Can't we go ahead without his consent? It's an ideal place, plenty of good water and hardly any clearing to be done."

"No chance of doing that. Where would we get the labor in the first place? Besides Headquarters stated that we are not to antagonize the natives and specially warned me to keep in with Nyanga—blast him!"

"Well, it's a good job Marka hasn't any grudge against us. It 'ud mean clearing out the forest if he had and I'd rather move ant-hills any day. I tell you what, old man—" Barry spoke excitedly, struck by a sudden idea—"I believe the two old bounders are playing a double game to see how much they can get out of the Government.

"When we first made a survey Marka begged us to build at his kraal—offered us free labor and the Lord knows what. Then as soon as he heard that Nyanga wouldn't have us he changed his tune and is charging top price for labor and is asking a big indemnity for the land we'll use. What do you think? Can't we play one off against the other?"

"No use. Nyanga hates Marka like poison. Says he's a thief and a liar. I can't imagine him entering into a conspiracy with Marka. No, he's got a grievance, real or fancied. If we could find out what it was and make it square with him, there'd be nothing more to it."

"Sar. Is it permitted that I speak?"

The captain regarded Intya closely.

"Well, sergeant?"

"Sar. I am from Nyanga's kraal. He is my uncle, and somewhat is known to me that is hidden from thee."

"Canst tell what meant the chief by the words, 'Restore my last resting-place'?"

"Aye. That I know and the reason wherefore he hath no regard for the white men. Thus it is——"

And Intya told of his love for Nada, of

how the chief had made another headman in his place, refusing to countenance his marriage until he had paid the strange *lobella*.

"Then thou art tied by the same rope that binds us," said the captain.

"Aye, *inkosi*. But perchance I know of a knife to cut the rope."

"Say on."

"First I would ask a boon."

"Does Sergeant Intya barter with his captain?" There was the quality of steel in the captain's voice, for all that he spoke quietly.

"Thy pardon, *inkosi*. But this matter is dear to my heart."

"What would ye ask?"

"That if all things happen according to thy liking, thou wilt give me an 'onorable deescharge. Again, that all things that ye do shall be done, in the eyes of my people, as if at my command."

"It is no small thing that ye ask, Intya, but it shall be granted thee. Thou shalt be given an honorable discharge and—save that it touch our honor—all things shall be as if at thy command."

"That is good, *inkosi*. Then know ye not that when a chief of my tribe dies, he is buried in an ant-hill that he may the sooner go to the land of the great spirits?"

"That I know. What of it?"

"At the edge of the clearing which surrounds my uncle's kraal stood many ant-hills. In them all, save one, were the bones of bygone chiefs. That other one was to have been the last resting-place of Nyanga when it came his time to die. To the kraal, many moons ago, came white soldiers, men of the artill'ry, with the big guns. The guns opened their mouths and roared and lo, the ant-hills vanished in a cloud of dust."

Barry cursed fluently.

"The —— fools. Some half-baked subaltern trying to show off I suppose," he said to the captain. "I don't blame Fatty for being mad after seeing the family vault blown sky-high."

"But what then?" asked Moulter.

"Thou must return the ant-hill that was to have been my uncle's, that is all," Intya replied simply.

"How?"

Intya looked at the white man in astonishment.

"Does the *inkosi* ask me how? Has he not the machine which flies through the air? Can he not then gather the pieces that were scattered by the shell and rebuild the hill? And if the hill be not until all is ready—what then? The spirits move mysteriously and no man shall say how these things may be."

"Ye speak in riddles, Intya."

"Somewhat. Hark ye, *inkosi*. It always seemed to me that my uncle's resting-place would have nought of comfort for him. His hill, look you, was but a small one, barely the height of a man, and in thickness less than that. Have ye not noticed that there are many ant-hills hereabouts of that size, and the road to Nyanga's kraal is of easy passage for the machine that has many feet." (Intya meant the tractors that were used in the work of clearing.)

A gleam of understanding showed in the captain's eyes as he turned to Barry with:

"Do you get it?"

"'Pon my soul, I believe I do. But can it be done? We'd have to move a hill bodily. No chance knocking one down and then trying to build it up again. Fatty couldn't be fooled that way."

"I think we can do it."

"But it's got to be done properly, with trimmings and all that."

"We'll leave that to Intya. What is thy counsel further, sergeant?"

SEVEN days later a number of Native Police, all owing allegiance to Nyanga, arrived at the kraal of the chief, affirming that they, at the request of Intya, had been granted permission to visit their wives. Each bore a present to the chief and spoke loudly in praise of Intya and the greatness of his wisdom.

Hard on their arrival came many natives of another district, and made their camp at the edge of the clearing which surrounded the kraal and near to where the ant-hills—the burial-places of the chiefs—had been.

These men were under the charge of Intya, and at his direction they erected a large canvas tent. This, the people of the kraal noted, was closely guarded at all times.

The returned soldiers noised it abroad that it was part of the white men's magic. That they, at the request of Intya, would attempt to restore the last resting-place of the chief. When questioned how such things could be, they lapsed into silence, thus further arousing the curiosity of the people.

Only Nyanga, the chief, professed indifference, though it was noted that he oftentimes chanced to walk that way.

Anon, in the darkness of the night, came two tractors, coupled together and hauling a low platform mounted on wheels. The platform was heavily laden, but none stopped to investigate, for of a surety this ponderous, clanking monster had its being in the place of the "wicked ones." Its single eye was blinding and winked not. So much for the search-light mounted on the first tractor.

Soon the tent hid the platform from the eyes of any curious ones who might have conquered their fear of the clanking monster, and then arose wild songs and the furious beating of tom-toms, drowning completely the shouted orders of white men, the rattling of chains and the blows of hammers.

With the rising of the morning sun the people of the kraal went out to view what new wonders had been performed, and lo! The swarm of laborers had vanished. The tent too had gone but in its place stood a high pile of brushwood and by it—hands uplifted as if invoking the great spirits—stood Intya.

"What means this?" some asked of the soldiers.

"Intya prays the great ones to aid the white men restore the resting-place of the chief."

A low droning filled the air and all faces were turned upward. An aeroplane swiftly came into their field of vision.

"What is that?" they cried in terror.

"The white man goes to the home of the spirits, seeking the place of the chief."

Certain of the old men, councilors, hastened to bear the news to Nyanga.

"Ye are bewitched fools," he cried in tones of contempt. "My resting-place hath been scattered to the four winds. Can Intya by words restore it, and for this other—this story of men flying—bah! It is child's talk."

"Yet come and see for thyself, great chief."

"Aye, I will come, but to see I will not."

Coming to the open ground about the kraal, they pointed in the direction of the aeroplane, now fast going out of sight.

"See ye," they said excitedly. "Yonder against the rising sun it is like unto a giant bird. Hear ye not the droning as if of many bees?"

"Without doubt it is a bird ye see, the bees ye hear," answered the chief. "But who is this?" Nyanga pointed to Intya, who was running swiftly toward them. "Aye, I see now. It is that thing of folly—that nephew of mine."

"Is it permitted that I speak, O chief?" Intya cried.

"Aye. Say on."

"Word hath come to me, O chief, from the spirits that thy request shall be granted. This night after the setting of the sun, when darkness covers the land, will I light the fire yonder—" he pointed to the pile of brushwood—"that the spirits may see to perform their tasks, and restore thy resting-place to thee."

"Art so sure then that the spirits will heed thy petition?"

"Without doubt, O chief. But first I would know thy intentions concerning two things."

"Speak."

"Thou wilt restore to me the headship of the kraal and give the maiden Nada to me? Such was thy promise to me. And thy promise to the white men, thou wilt also abide by that?"

"My word given, have I ever denied it?"

"Nay, great one."

"Then see that thou canst accomplish all that thou hast boasted. If ye fail, thy friendship with the white men shall not save thee."

"I shall not fail. But thou wilt be here, thou and all the people, this night to witness the wonders?"

"Aye."

"Then until that time, let it be thy pleasure that none shall come near to the place yonder; it is sacred to the spirits."

At the command of the chief the people fled with one accord to their huts, there to wait the time appointed for the wonder-working to begin.

Only the maiden Nada stayed for a brief moment to speak with Intya:

"Canst thou indeed do this thing, O bull of might? An ye doubt, let us flee together from this place and seek safety from the wrath of my father among the white men."

"Fear not, Nada. I shall not fail. All shall be as I have said."

"Somewhat am I afraid of thee, O powerful one. Thou dost talk with the spirits, yet seek my love. Thou canst perform wonder-workings, yet ask for—this."

She kissed him, then sped quickly away.

THE sun had set and the land was covered with darkness — tropical darkness.

Out on the edge of the clearing came the people of the kraal. Cattle disturbed by the strange exodus lowed mournfully; the half-starved dogs of the village set up a noisy clamor, yelping with pain as they were driven off by well-aimed stones.

Anon all was still, save for the whimpering of a frightened child, and the people of the kraal waited in silence for the wonders to begin. To them came the voice of Intya—

"Are ye all here, O people of Nyanga?"

"Aye. None are left in the huts," answered the voice of the chief.

"Then move not from the places ye now hold. Wait in patience and pray that the great spirits deal kindly with us."

There was a sharp hiss and a shower of sparks, then a bright light shot up into the air.

Up and up it went until it seemed as if it would of surety enter the land of the spirits.

"It is Intya's messenger," murmured one.

As they watched it broke into other lights, many-colored, and then to their ears came the sound of a sharp report.

"The spirits are angry."

"Nay, watch—listen," comforted Intya.

A low droning filled the air. Louder and louder it came. Anon it seemed to be directly overhead and then ghostly red flames appeared to be dancing in the darkness, flames which twisted and twirled into many fantastic figures.

"Have mercy on us, O Intya," cried Nyanga. "The evil spirits are about us."

"Nay. They are the spirits of the Great Great. Watch."

The command was needless, for the people could not take their eyes away from the strange things that were happening in the darkness.

" 'Tis as if some mighty bird were all afire, and seeks to escape his death-agony," said one.

Gradually the flames died away and all was still, save for the droning noise which became ever fainter.

Then from a great height, or so it seemed in the darkness, came a blinding ray of light. Straight down it came as a stone dropped from the hand.

And then Intya applied a torch to the pile of brush. Quickly it caught a-light, and as it burned, the voice of Intya was heard ordering them to come nearer. With fear in their hearts the people obeyed him.

"Watch the fire of sacrifice," cried Intya. "The spirits have heard our plea and have granted the desire of the chief. Watch the fire of sacrifice."

As the light of the fire died down the light from above was played directly on it.

Then, seen dimly at first through the thick haze of smoke, the people could discern the shadowy outlines of an ant-hill. Clearer and more distinct it became as the smoke died away and the people saw that this was no shadowy figment of the imagination, but that it was indeed an ant-hill—the resting-place of the chief. As this became plainly evident to them they all fell to their knees, hiding their faces in their hands, crying loudly:

"Merciful are the spirits. Great is Intya, their mouthpiece, and the white men, their messengers."

OF THE chain of aerodromes which make the Cape to Cairo air-flight possible, the one of Nyanga is generally acknowledged to be the best. No others can compete with its vast, level landing-field. No others have such well-built, comfortable quarters for the pilots. The whole-hearted manner in which the laborers perform their task of caring for the place is the admiration of the officers in charge of other aerodromes whose daily portion it is to deal with laziness and thievery, with desertion and mutiny.

Perhaps the reason for all this is that Intya, the chief—Nyanga having abdicated in his nephew's favor—was once a sergeant of the Native Police; perhaps because the people had seen at first hand the wonder-working of the white men, having a lively remembrance of the fact that the white men could command the spirits to come to their aid.

And of a surety no other station boasts a chief, one of royal blood, as a "lookout."

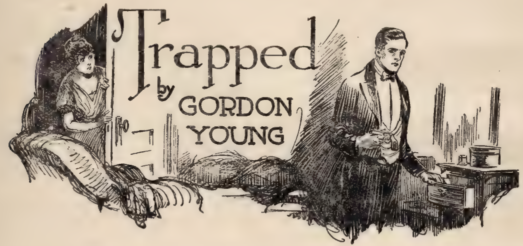
Proud is Nyanga of his position—happily ignorant of the fact that it was specially created for him—as at the first signs of an approaching aeroplane he tolls a large bell warning all to clear the field.

He firmly believes that a landing could not be safely made unless he tolled his bell and—for they are a superstitious crowd—the pilots have adopted him as their mascot. Nor will one ascend until Nyanga has tolled the bell, commending them to the care of the great spirits.

Near to the bell stands a solitary ant-hill. It is destined to be the last resting-place of

Nyanga. It was his wish that the bell should be hung near the ant-hill, for he said:

"When my time comes to go to the land of the spirits, this shall be my resting-place. At the bottom of the hill ye shall leave a hole so that my snake, that soul of mine, may be free to come and go as it pleases. Thus may I come out and toll the bell when those worthy ones, those men of keen eyes, go forth to greet the spirits of the air."



Trapped

by GORDON YOUNG

Author of "Blackmail," "Wild Blood," etc.

GRANT DOUGLAS left the girl in the midst of other admirers and came into his father's darkened library to think about her.

He had known Frances Wyck for about a month. Behind her almost flirtatious manner he had seen that she was warily alert, and her blue eyes at times had an abrupt chilliness that was not explainable by anything he knew of other women.

Grant felt that it was very bad to have his father and brother think him a thief; but to have the woman that he suddenly loved think so too—and not care! That was what really bewildered him, and he sat in the dark and brooded.

No doubt it was his brother who had told her; but no doubt "Brother" John—it was in irony that Grant called him "Brother" John—would have been as surprized as shocked had he known how Miss Wyck felt about it.

Most people approved of John, though he was preternaturally suave as perhaps a rising young lawyer should be; and, so Grant felt, was always making people around him painfully aware of his attentiveness to business. Tall, noiseless, soft-spoken, dark-eyed, pleasant, with a quick brain and an exasperatingly modest air, John had become the pride of his father's eye and very nearly the most distinguished member of Douglas, Douglas & Douglas, Attorneys-at-Law.

John loved the law, and Grant hated it; John was up to all the curlicues, wrinkles and tricks that a legal gamester can play—that was business; but Grant had never won a case in which he did not believe that his client was right—that was Quixotic.

John could win anything. He might get even Miss Wyck.

That night he was staying late in the city—to attend to business, he said. Always business came first.

The house was packed with week-enders. His father enjoyed company by the herds; and John in a sly calculating way thought it was a good thing to entertain—good for business.

That evening a group of people had chatted for a moment or two about a police raid on an exclusive gambling-place.

"You have flirted with chance?" Miss Wyck had asked.

"I am a lawyer," said Grant, who also owed some pressing debts at cards.

"Risky things are most delightful," she added slowly; "aren't they?"

Under her blonde fluffiness there was an almost mysterious reserve, a sort of watchful purpose, a steely glint, that puzzled him. Other people had not seemed to notice it, in fact she did not seem to show much of that manner when talking with other people.

"I love to gamble," she dropped her voice. "I can understand—I really can—why people do crime. The excitement—it is the same as gambling."

"Nothing so romantic," he said. "I never knew anybody to gamble to lose. A man takes any chance to win."

"Even turn burglar?" the question slipped smoothly from her lips, but with such a significant glance and intonation that Grant flushed.

The office safe, to which only members of the firm had access, just about a month before had been opened, some money taken and the safe carefully relocked. Almost unfortunately Grant, whose weakness was gambling, had made a winning that same evening and paid some of the debts of which his father was angrily aware. No denial of his could make either his father or brother believe that he had not "borrowed" the money.

His father was an impulsive high-tempered generous man, who had been in a rage for several days over the matter, then had seemed to forget it.

Grant knew by the manner of Miss Wyck that she had heard the story and he was astounded when she reached over and patted his hand quickly saying:

"There are worse things. I've broken into locks myself."

She seemed inviting intimacy, almost asking for confidences. It bewildered him.

He really did not know much about Frances Wyck. His father knew her—"a daughter of an old friend," he had said; and Grant's sister liked her. Frances was a pretty young woman with something fascinatingly dangerous about her, and in spite of her nearly flirtatious gaiety, he felt that she was far-sighted and he knew that she was watchful. But he loved her—and had told her so. In answer he got laughter that gave no decision, but did not discourage him.

THE library door opened and shut quietly.

"That you, dad?" Grant called. No answer. He waited a moment—waited for the light to be turned on. But there was only silence.

"Who is it?"

Silence.

"Come on. What's the joke?"

No reply.

Grant arose, reached to the table and jerked the cord of the reading-lamp, at the same time looking over his shoulder and into the muzzle of an ivory-handled revolver behind which crouched a man in evening dress; his hair had been hastily rumpled and a white handkerchief was tied around his face clear to the eyes.

"I say——" Grant began.

"Shut up!" The voice was low, hoarse, disguised.

The light was indistinct outside of the brilliant glow immediately under the lamp. Most men look alike in dress suits. The house was full of men in them, so it was not easy even to guess who the figure might be.

At a gesture Grant lifted his hands.

The man obviously had not expected to find any one there, but hurriedly made what disguise he could by pulling his hair down over his eyes, tying the handkerchief about his face and crouching as he did so that it was impossible to judge his height. A hoarse whisper will hide almost anybody's natural voice.

"Open that safe," said the man.

"Can't."

"Open that——"

"Combination's been changed," said Grant.

"Lie!" The hoarse voice appeared a little shocked.

"Only yesterday," Grant insisted. "Combination changed."

It had not been, but he was taking a chance that the burglar would not know better.

The burglar did. He said—

"Go over there."

Grant went.

The masked man followed him warily. When Grant had kneeled before the safe door a flash-light streamed across his shoulder on to the circular metal about the knob.

"Open it!"

"I tell you I can't!" Grant protested.

The man began calling off the combination, forcing Grant to follow it. The robber had come expecting to open the safe quietly, but finding Grant there perhaps thought it easier to make him help than to tie and gag him.

Grant had no great wonder as to how the fellow knew the combination. The safe was really more of a fire-proof box than anything else, and at least three or four of the Douglas clerks had been given the combination when sent to the house after forgotten papers.

When the door swung open, the fellow said—

"Hand me that yellow envelop."

It was the first thing in sight—and contained money. Grant knew there were ten thousand-dollar bills in it.

He felt the muzzle of the gun against his spine as he held the envelop over his shoulder. It was roughly jerked away.

"Stay where you are on your knees. If you look toward me, I'll kill you!"

As the man said that the flashlight went out.

Grant knew without looking around that the fellow was slowly backing across the room—not toward the door through which he had come, but toward the door of a little stairway that led to his father's den. The fellow seemed to have made himself familiar with the house.

Grant began slowly to turn his head, but the vague light of the reading-lamp revealed the movement.

"Keep your head still!" said the voice.

A moment later there was a resounding smash; then the door shut. There was a clatter of feet on the stairs. The man was gone.

Grant felt that he must have backed into the short pedestal of the tall vase, for it overturned with a terrific crash.

HE LEAPED up and ran to the door through which the fellow had gone. It was locked.

He turned. Already people were beating on the other door that opened from the hall into the library. The fellow had locked that as he came in. The fall of the vase had been heard.

Grant opened the door—

"Quick—a robber—he went that way," Grant cried and pointed.

There was a start for the door, but he said that it was locked; some stopped, but others went and tried the door.

Among those who stood near Grant listening closely to him were Frances Wyck and his father. There was the usual babble and flurry of excitement. Some women felt it was a good chance to get special attention by being hysterical; men talked excitedly and a few hurried out as if in search of the robber, but more likely to be the first to carry the news.

As Grant was rapidly telling what happened, he looked into Miss Wyck's face. She was watching him closely with something more than the interest of the curious excited women about him. In fact, she did not appear excited at all, but her tenseness was inescapable and her eyes scrutinizing.

In turning from her he looked toward his father and was very nearly unable to go on.

Judge Douglas, as he was called out of deference to past honors and continued success, was a robust man of the Southern type. His face was inclined to be red, but at that moment it was nearly pale; his features were prominent and strong and the graying long hair was brushed back over his head.

To those around him Judge Douglas presented the air of one more sorry to have guests disturbed than to lose whatever robbers might take.

There was chattering speculation about the robber and all were soon of the opinion that the fellow had been frightened into haste by the noise he made in overturning the vase, and they were convinced that the robber was one of themselves—a guest in the house.

The people began to withdraw, still in agitated wonder; but as Grant started out his father called to him for a private word. Judge Douglas turned and talked to Miss Wyck until every one else had left the library, then he accompanied her to the door, closed it and turned toward Grant.

"You—you—" he began very angry, "you scoundrel!"

"I don't understand."

"You lie, sir!" Judge Douglas cried.

"I? Lie!"

"And steal!"

"Father! What do you dare mean by that!"

"That you opened this safe and imagined a masked bandit when you tumbled against the vase. You didn't know the door to my den was locked—till you tried to leave. You had this one locked to keep people out.

You were trapped and lied—but not even cleverly."

"Father!"

"Never use that word to me again, sir! Never again! The father of a thief—no! You gambler! Cheat! Thief!"

"I do gamble. I do not cheat. I am no thief."

"You robbed the office safe too. I couldn't believe it of you. But here—here—it is proved. I trapped you!"

"You trapped me! You—stoop to that? Contemptible!" Grant was angry.

"Contemptible, eh? Contemptible—to get caught. Your brother begged me not to do it. John has defended you—blamed our clerks—anybody—everybody—to protect you. All in spite of your disrespect to and hatred for him. He said that one way to catch a thief was to set a trap—but that you weren't a thief. You are!"

"John suggested it?" said Grant.

"John had defended you first, last and all the time. If he suggested the trap it was because he believed in you. Wanted to prove to me that you would not steal. You've got your inheritance. All of it. Take it and be out of this house by morning!"

"But fa— Judge Douglas, I did not——"

"What were you doing in here—door locked—low light? A detective has watched you."

"Detective! Who is he—what—father?"

"I had to be sure. I wanted to know what debts you had. I didn't want to tempt you to lie by questioning you. I wanted to know."

"John too—the detective? He suggested it?"

"John has been your best friend. Why did you sneak away and come in here alone?"

"I came——"

"Yes, you came. Why?"

"To think," said Grant.

"To think—about your debts and this safe. The temptation was too strong. You thought you could invent the story of the masked robber. You are no longer my son. I rewrite my will—tonight—now. Get out!"

"Father!"

"I am no father of yours. You thief!"

As Grant went toward the door, it opened and John came hurrying in, closing the door softly behind him.

JOHN was rather slender and a little stooped, with dark watchful eyes and the fixed smile of one who wishes to appear agreeable to all people. He had an almost kindly expression, though Grant knew him for as cold-blooded a lawyer as ever bamboozled a jury. His voice was trained, smooth, the words carefully chosen and pronounced.

He was about as excitable as a piece of iron; but as he came hurrying into the library carrying his hat and wearing his topcoat, John showed a great deal of agitation.

"Grant—Grant! Tell me—it isn't so? It was a robber—wasn't it? I just this minute got here and heard. It was——"

He gripped Grant's arm, looking at him earnestly.

Judge Douglas pushed him aside with:

"No, John. Not this time—you can't defend him. There is no doubt and not the trace of a robber. Imagine a burglar telling Grant the combination to the safe. It is not even a clever story."

"Grant!" John exclaimed. "I don't believe it. Father, he couldn't—he simply couldn't. And yet—oh, Grant!"

Grant felt like a brute for not feeling that John was sincere; but it was expecting the unnatural for a man of John's money-loving nature not to be pleasantly aware that his inheritance was being doubled though the family honor was being smirched.

Grant turned to the door and as he went out he heard his father saying that right then and there a new will must be made.

"But you will surely destroy it tomorrow," John replied. He knew the impulsiveness of his father, perhaps even better than Grant.

"Never, my boy! Never. Gambler—liar—thief. Stranger!"

It was nearing eleven o'clock as Grant went out and he turned up the stairs hurriedly, anxious to avoid every one and be by himself; but at the top of the stairs he met Frances Wyck.

He spoke and started by, but she caught his arm, saying—

"I have waited for you, Grant."

"You too want the truth," he said bitterly. "Well, then, I am a thief. I turned the vase over by accident and imagined the masked man."

"You imagine badly if you think I believe that," she replied with arresting calmness, the more surprizing because of her ruffles and fluffiness.

"What! You don't think——

Hope came to him suddenly.

"No. I do not *think*."

Her gesture was mothering. He never would be able to understand her. It was the last sort of gesture and tone that he would have expected from her. More surprizingly, she said—

"And I would not have blamed you if you were guilty."

"Frances!"

"Oh I can say that, knowing you are not guilty."

Grant impulsively took her hand. She drew it away.

"But——" he began protestingly.

She read his thought and answered—

"I do not draw back from you and I believe you innocent."

"You know I love you."

She replied—

"I know that you are grateful."

"You know, Frances, this is not the first time I have been thought a thief."

She nodded.

"John told you," Grant went on. "Yes, John would tell you."

"Shh-sh— you will be angry if you keep on talking. John said that he deeply regretted that your father suspected you. He told me himself that he was sure you would never do such a thing."

"But in telling you that, he could tell you that I was suspected," Grant cried. "Oh, he is a born lawyer."

"Shh-hh," she repeated. "Just now you should avoid hasty judgment—it has made you a thief."

"I know. I know," he replied humbly. "It must be some man in the house. There are a dozen who—a detective too."

"A detective!"

"Yes. I wish that he had kept better watch on me."

Both were silent for a time, then he extended his hand.

"I am going before sunrise—my father said I could have the money that was stolen. That is to be my inheritance. Good-by."

"No—no. Not before sunrise. Please Grant, promise me. Don't be stubborn. Don't rush off like that."

"I was told to go."

"I am telling you not to go. Please."

"And have people come up to me, saying how sorry they are, yet with the joy of scandal on their faces! No thank you. I'll clear out. A thief has no right to love a respectable woman, so Miss Wyck I——"

"You don't know that I *am* respectable," she said quickly, smiling, speaking so easily that he was astonished.

"But——" he was showing astonishment.

"You are ready to doubt!" she flashed, and laughed softly, not merrily.

"No. I love you," he protested.

"And you are so sure that you wouldn't love a woman who wasn't respectable! No Grant, it isn't love with you. It is gratitude—and curiosity. And if you won't leave the house at sunrise, I'll make a confession."

"Confession!"

"Confession."

"What—tell me—I don't understand," he protested.

"No, and you wouldn't if I told you—now. Good-by, Grant."

He tried to question her, to talk, but she was evasive and cryptic, and at last he strode off, bitter.

FRANCES watched him go. She was thoughtful and the steely quality that had glittered under her fluff and laces appeared in her pretty face.

"If I could get in his room," she said to herself, "I am sure that I could find that money. I simply must get it away from him without his knowing."

She stood for a long time in the upstairs hall while the music for dancing and voices of people floated up. At last resolutely she went looking for a servant and, having found one, followed him back up the stairs, turning into her room as he went on to Grant's door.

"Who is it?" Grant called, replying to the knock.

"Your father sir, wishes to speak to you. He would like for you to wait in his den, sir."

No answer. The servant went away, and presently Grant came out. He had no sooner disappeared down the hall than Frances darted from concealment and ran into his room.

She began hastily, deftly, with the manner of one accustomed to going through other people's belongings without disturbing anything to search the drawers of his room.

Footsteps were outside of the door. Grant had returned sooner than she expected. She had thought that he might wait indefinitely, but Judge Douglas and John had been in the den and Grant learned at once that no one wished to see him.

Frances, caught without means of getting out unseen, looked quickly around her and darted behind the open door of a closet.

Grant was angry and hopeless. He thought of hunting out the servant and demanding who had given that false message but instead he sat down on a chair to think and brooded.

It was very cramped and close quarters behind the closet door, but as she had no one to blame but herself, Frances endured it with good grace and kept her eyes fastened on his face. When he finally arose, took out a revolver and examined it meditatively, she was startled into a movement that made a slight sound.

Grant wheeled and stood listening; but at that moment some people passed with much talk through the hall and he either forgot the noise that had attracted his attention or thought it had been made by those in the hall. He threw the gun dejectedly back into the drawer and slumped miserably into a chair—and there he sat, on and on.

Frances began to be alarmed, then weary. Her body ached from standing tense in a position that permitted little change and no rest. He would sit as if frozen for a half-hour, then stir slightly and again become immobile.

There was no way for her to escape unless he left the room or went to sleep; and luck was not with her. He did neither. She blamed herself for having been careless enough to get caught in a situation of the kind; but self-blame could not help. Grant did not leave his chair. She leaned against the wall to get what rest she could, and smiled painfully.

Hours went by. She was nearly exhausted. But her fluffiness was only on the surface; she did not faint or sink to the floor.

The house had become quiet after the bustle and tramp, the laughter and calling of partings in the hall and at the doors.

Then out of the silence hurried slippered feet went pattering through the hall. There was a sharp knock on a door not far away—an excited voice rose indistinctly—other excited voices joined it and there was increasing excitement and babbling, with people scurrying about.

Grant went to the door, listening. Some one knocked. He opened it quickly.

"Your father—he has been murdered!"

Grant turned weakly and tried to ask questions.

"He was heard moaning—beaten on the head and stabbed!"

Grant, half reeling, went into the hall and started for his father's room.

Frances waited. It was not going to be easy to get out of that room unseen with the hall full of people running to and fro, though Judge Douglas's room was at the other end of the house.

When it seemed quiet for a moment she slipped from behind the door, but at once moved back. Some one was coming, noiselessly.

She could not see the face, but a figure in a bathrobe came into the room, swiftly opened the top dressing-table drawer, threw something into it and hurriedly shuffled out without looking around.

Frances thought that she knew who it was, and darting across the room, opened the drawer and looked at what had been left.

"I guess right!" she said to herself, and a moment later she darted furtively into the hall and to her own room, where quickly as possible she gave herself the appearance of hasty dressing and hurried to join the group in and about the room of Judge Douglas.

He lay on a broad bed of the old-fashioned Southern kind, with a high carved headboard, and dark red splotches were over the pillows and stained the soft fresh linen. The assault had been more than murderous; it had been particularly brutal. The scalp was torn from the blow of some blunt instrument evidently intended to make the sleeping man unconscious and, that there might be no possibility of recovery, he had been stabbed. He moaned, unconscious, and seemed to be dying.

John was on his knees beside the bed, praying aloud. Behind him, Grant stood gazing down sorrowfully. Other people disheveled and awed stood about, dumbly staring.

Judge Grant was greatly admired as men are likely to be when they overcome the fault of temper by frank apology and great generosity. His daughter had fainted and was being supported by friends who scarcely knew what to do.

After the first glance about the room, particularly at the two sons, Frances asked if the doctor had been called. He had. The police? They, too.

The doctor arrived first and at once cleared the room of all who were not relatives.

WHEN the two plain-clothes men arrived, John was sent for. He took them into the library, closing the door. He was ever neat in his appearance and had found time to slip into his clothes.

Frances ran upstairs, entered Judge Douglas's den, and softly descending the stairs from there, listened at the door.

John was saying:

"You understand, gentlemen, how reluctant I am to accuse or even suspect any one of this monstrous crime and I shall accuse no one. I shall state the facts and you may judge of the evidence."

He then related the story of the masked robber which had not been believed by his father.

"My father and my brother quarreled. Their voices were loud. Many heard them. I had been detained in the city by business and as soon as I arrived home I heard of the supposed robber and came into the library where my father was just announcing his intention of making a new will at once and had ordered my brother to leave the house by morning."

The detectives were beginning to see light.

"I endeavored," John went on earnestly, "to dissuade my father from his intention. Gentlemen, I love my brother, though we have never been friends, that is, close friends. But my father was determined. The will was made out and placed in this safe. You see, gentlemen, the safe is open. The will is not there. My father has been murdered!"

The detectives looked at each other understandingly: the motive was clear.

"But, gentlemen," John declared passionately, "I can not even now believe my brother guilty—that he would do such a thing. I can only suggest that you search the room of the only person who would have any interest in taking the will to destroy it and in murdering my father so that he could not make a new one. Oh, it is terrible and it was foolish—foolish as well as horrible. Tomorrow, within a week, a month at most, my father would have forgiven him.

"So, gentlemen, I suggest that you search the room and if you there find anything to warrant the action, you must immediately bring him here. I shall wait for you to return."

The detectives went out with long, satisfied strides.

Frances remained at the door, which she had barely opened. It had a catch lock. John sat in a deep chair with his back toward her.

The detectives, bringing Grant with them, soon re-entered and placed two large envelopes on the table.

"Oh, Grant, Grant!" John cried, rising and reaching toward him at the sight of the objects the officers laid down. "How could you!"

Grant looked about helplessly, bewildered. He could scarcely speak—

"You believe that of me?"

"But Grant—this money—this will—in your room."

Grant shook his head. He could not explain. He could not speak. He knew that he was innocent, but he was too bewildered to protest.

"Grant, you know, you know very well that no matter what the terms of the will were, I would have shared equally with you. You knew that—and yet, you murdered our father!"

Grant cried out. He was aghast. He had not expected that.

"Officers, arrest him," John said.

The detectives laid hands on him; then all turned at the sound of light footsteps and a clear pleasant voice:

"PLEASE, please. Just a moment."

"Ah, Miss Wyck," said John, turning toward her; then to the officers, "The private detective, gentlemen, whom my father employed to watch Grant."

Grant looked at her with weary, tired eyes. He felt betrayed, lost, shattered. Then he heard her say—

"But Grant is innocent."

"Alas, no, Miss Wyck," John began. "You are not familiar with the evidence. That robber was imagined——"

"Not by me," she said quickly. "I heard him!"

"Heard him!" John's voice was incredulous.

"Yes. I was eavesdropping. I would have come into the library but the door was locked. I am sure too, that the robber turned over the vase intentionally."

"Intentionally!" John cried, and the two detectives echoed him. Grant was like a man returning to life.

"Yes, it would have been such a stupid thing to do by accident; but such a brilliant thing if intentionally. It brought people running—and Grant's father found him in a compromising position. The robber was clever. It kept Judge Douglas from suspecting—say, any of the guests."

"But Miss Wyck—the stolen will—my father—where else is the motive except——' he indicated Grant.

"That's true, perhaps," said Frances. "But Grant did not leave his room. I was there with him."

"You—in Grant's room!" John was shocked. "Miss Wyck, though you are a detective—it—you are a woman."

"Yes. For that reason I did not let him know I was there."

"He didn't know—really Miss Wyck——"

"Yes, really, Mr. Douglas. I was behind a closet door. I had to stay there. I am a woman, you know."

"Why were you there?" John demanded almost unpleasantly.

"I thought the robber would try to clinch the suspicions against Grant by putting the money in his room."

"And—Miss Wyck, and then?" John asked quickly.

"Some one knocked and told Grant his father had been killed."

"Had been killed. Yes. Then—then you got out without being seen?" John asked.

"Yes, Mr. Douglas."

"How fortunate, Miss Wyck. Had people seen——"

"Yes, Mr. Douglas—for had the man seen who immediately entered Grant's room——"

"What—somebody—you saw?"

"I saw, but not his face."

"Oh," said John.

"I saw what he did. He put those things in the top dresser drawer."

"Then, Miss Wyck. Then?"

"He went out quickly."

"And you did not see——"

"I did not see his face. No. But I saw the money and document."

The detectives made surprized sounds and stared at each other. John put his hands to his head as if to collect whirling thoughts and Grant almost collapsed but caught himself at the edge of the table. Miss Wyck was undisturbed. Her blonde fluffy hair gave her an almost frivolous appearance if one did not notice her eyes so coldly blue just then.

"Who—who——" said John with trembling voice and indignation, "could have done that—and—why?"

"I thought," she replied, "it possible that this mysterious person had been plotting with Grant to steal the money and then the will."

A hopeless groan came from Grant.

The detectives looked wisely at each other; this woman was saving them the trouble of thinking.

John turned on his brother furiously—

"So that—*that*—is what you did!"

"THERE seemed no reason in the world," said Frances, "why anybody but Grant would be interested in destroying his father's will."

"None," said John, his eyes accusingly on Grant.

"None," said one detective.

"Yes, none," said the other.

"But," Frances continued, "there must be some other reason some place. The man who brought those things to Grant was not his friend."

"You did not see him!" John cried. "You said——"

"No—I saw only his dressing gown. I am a woman—a woman never forgets details of a garment. Colors are indicative of character. This one was covered with black dots. I saw it again in Judge Douglas' room—and there I saw the man's face too, though he was kneeling!"

"Who? Who? For God's sake, who?" Grant cried.

The two detectives leaned forward breathlessly.

John was standing tense, watchful.

"It was worn by the only person in the world who would have an object in seeing Judge Douglas dead so that he might immediately enter upon his large inheritance while some one else was suspected of murder."

"You lie!" John screamed at her. "This is a plot—dastardly. You lie—I tell you. *I* do such a thing!"

Frances was unruffled. She faced him steadily.

"Why not? You slipped into the library and unexpectedly found Grant here and made him open the safe—then overturned the vase. You wanted to make his father think him a thief— Oh, yes, I saw you. I know you were supposed to be in the city."

"Officers," John cried, "they have plotted to ruin me! Arrest him—arrest her too!"

"You are clever, Mr. Douglas, but——"

"You can prove nothing!" John cried. "You were in his room. You are——"

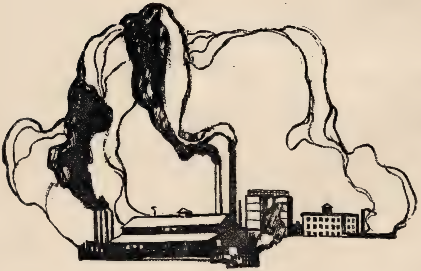
Grant jumped forward with upraised fist. Before John could move or the officers raise a hand, Frances had caught his wrist:

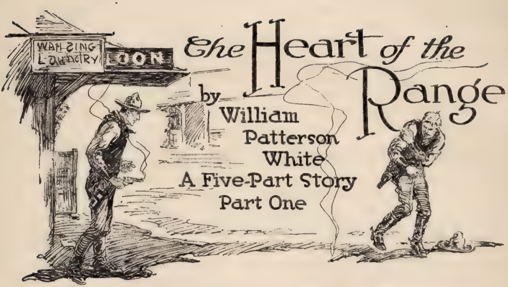
"Be quiet, Grant. Don't you see that he is confessing in every word that he says!"

Then the door opened and the doctor came in slowly. He was a big man with a deep voice and a slow emphatic manner. He looked from one to the other and addressing John said:

"Judge Douglas is in a very serious condition. He may not die; but I fear for him as he is using up what little strength he has to make a statement. He recognized his assailant and——"

The doctor did not finish. He sprang forward, but not soon enough to prevent the report of a revolver; and John fell dead. In his hand was a pearl-handled revolver and with that he had made a full confession.





The Heart of the Range

by William Patterson White

A Five-Part Story

Part One

Author of "Hidden Trails," "Longhorns," etc.

CHAPTER I

THE HORSE-THIEF

IT WAS a warm Summer morning in the town of Farewell. Save for a dozen horses tied to the hitching-rail in front of various saloons and the Blue Pigeon Store, and Bill Lainey, the fat landlord of the hotel, who sat snoring in a reenforced telegraph chair on the sidewalk in the shade of his wooden awning, Main Street was a howling wilderness.

Dust overlay everything. It had not rained in weeks. In the blacksmith shop, diagonally across the street from the hotel, Piney Jackson was shoeing a mule. The mule was invisible, but one knew it was a mule because Piney Jackson had just come out and taken a two-by-four from the woodpile behind the shop. And it was a well-known fact that Piney never used a two-by-four on any animal other than a mule. But this by the way.

In the barroom of the Happy Heart Saloon there were only two customers and the bartender. One of the former, a brown-haired, sunburnt young man with ingenuous blue eyes, was singing:

"Jog on, jog on, the footpath way,
An' merrily jump the stile O!
Yore cheerful heart goes all the day,
Yore sad tires in a mile O!"

Mr. Racey Dawson, having successfully sung the first verse, rested both elbows on the bar and grinned at the bartender. That worthy grinned back and knowing Mr. Dawson, slid the bottle along the bar.

"Have one yoreself, Bill," Mr. Dawson nodded to the bartender. "Whu-where's Swing? Oh, yeah."

Mr. Dawson, head up, chest out, stepping high and walking very stiffly as befitted a gentleman somewhat overserved with liquor, crossed the barroom to where bristle-haired Swing Tunstall sat on a chair and slumbered, his head on his arms and his arms on a table.

Mr. Dawson stooped and blew into Mr. Tunstall's right ear. Mr. Tunstall began to snore gently. Growing irritated by this continued indifference on the part of Mr. Tunstall, Mr. Dawson seized the chair by rung and back and incontinently dumped Mr. Tunstall all abroad on the saloon floor.

Mr. Tunstall promptly hitched himself into a corner and drifted deeper into slumber. Mr. Dawson turned a perplexed face on the bartender.

"Now what yuh gonna do with a feller like that?" Mr. Dawson asked plaintively.

Mr. Jack Richie, manager of the Cross-in-a-box ranch, entering at the moment, temporarily diverted Mr. Dawson's attention. For Mr. Dawson had once ridden for the Cross-in-a-box outfit. Hence he was moved literally to fall upon the neck of Mr. Richie.

"Lean on yore own breakfast," urged Mr. Richie, studiously dissembling his joy at sight of his old friend and carefully steering Mr. Dawson against the bar. "Here, I know what you need. Drink hearty, Racey."

" 'S'on me," declared Mr. Dawson. "Everythin's on me. I gug-got money, I have, an' I aim to spend it free an' plenty 'cause there's more where I'm goin'. An' I ain't gonna earn it punchin' cows, neither."

"Don't do nothin' rash," Mr. Richie advised, and took advantage of a friend's privilege to be insulting. "I helped lynch a road-agent only last month."

"Which the huh-hold-up business is too easy for a live man," opined Mr. Dawson. "We want somethin' mum-more diff-diff-difficult, me an' Swing do, so we're goin' to Arizona where the gold grows. No more wrastlin' cows. No more hard work for us. *We're* gonna get rich quick, we are. What you laughin' at?"

"I never laugh," denied Mr. Richie. "When yo're stakin' out claims don't forget me."

"We won't," averred Mr. Dawson solemnly. "Le's have another."

They had another—several others.

The upshot was that when Mr. Richie—who was the lucky possessor of a head that liquor did not easily affect—departed homeward at four P.M., he left behind him a sadly plastered Mr. Dawson.

Mr. Tunstall, of course, was still sleeping deeply and noisily. But Mr. Dawson had long since lost interest in Mr. Tunstall. It is doubtful whether he remembered that Mr. Tunstall existed. The two had begun their party immediately after breakfast. Mr. Tunstall had succumbed early, but Mr. Dawson had not once halted his efforts to make the celebration a huge success. So it is not a subject for surprize that Mr. Dawson, some thirty minutes after bidding Mr. Richie an affectionate farewell, should stagger out into the street and ride away on the horse of some one else.

The ensuing hours of the evening and the night were a merciful blank to Mr. Dawson. His first conscious thought was when he awoke at dawn on a side-hill, a sharp rock prodding him in the small of the back and the bridle-reins of his dozing horse wound round one arm. Only it was not his horse. His horse was a red roan. This horse was a bay. It wasn't his saddle, either.

"Where's my hoss?" he demanded of the world at large and sat up suddenly.

The sharp movement wrung a groan from the depths of his being. The loss of his horse was drowned in the pains of his aching head. Never was such an all-pervading ache. He knew the top was coming off. He knew it. He could feel it, and then did —with his fingers. He groaned again.

His tongue was dry as cotton and it hurt him to swallow. He stood up but as promptly sat down. In a whisper—for speech was torture—he began to revile himself for a fool.

"I might 'a' knowed it," was his plaint. "I had a feelin' when I took that last glass it was one too many. I never did know when to stop. I'd like to know how I got here an' where my hoss is, an' who belongs to this one."

He eyed the mount with disfavor. He had never cared for bays.

"An' that ain't much of a saddle, neither," he went on with his soliloquy. "Cheap saddle—looks like a boy's saddle—an' a old saddle—bet Noah used one just like it; try to rope with that saddle an' yuh'd pull the horn to ——engone. Wonder what's in that saddle-pocket."

He pulled himself erect slowly and tenderly. His knees were very shaky. His head throbbed like a squeezed boil, but—he wanted to learn what was in that saddle-pocket. Possibly he might obtain therein a clue to the horse's owner.

He slipped the strap of the pocket-flap, flipped it open, inserted his fingers and drew forth a small package wrapped in newspaper and tied with the blue string affected by the Blue Pigeon Store in Farewell.

Mr. Dawson balanced the package on two fingers for a reflective instant, then he snapped the string and opened the package.

"Socks an' a undershirt," he said disgustedly and started to say more but paused for there was something queer about that undershirt. His head was still spinning and his eyes were sandy but he perceived quite plainly that there were narrow blue ribbons running round the neck of that undershirt. He unrolled the socks and found them much longer in the leg than the kind habitually worn by men.

Mr. Dawson agitatedly dived his hand once more into the saddle-pocket. And this time he pulled out a tortoise-shell shuttle round which was wrapped several inches of lingerie edging. But Mr. Dawson did not call it lingerie edging. He called it tatting and swore again.

"That settles it," he said cheerlessly. "I've stole some woman's cayuse."

CHAPTER II

THE YELLOW DOGS

IT WAS a chastened Racey Dawson who returned to Farewell. He went directly to the blacksmith shop.

"'Lo, Hoss-Thief," was Piney Jackson's cheerful greeting.

"Whose is it?" demanded Racey Dawson, wiping his hot face. "Whose hoss have I stole?"

"Oh, you'll catch it," chuckled the humorous Piney. "Yep, you betcha. You've got a gall, you have. Clamly prancin' out of a saloon an' glommin' on to a lady's hoss. What kind o' doin's is that, I'd like to know?"

"You blasted idjit!" cried the worried Racey. "Whose hoss is this?"

"I kind o' guessed maybe somethin' disgraceful like this here would happen when I seen you an' yore friend sashay into the Happy Heart. An' the barkeep said you had two snifters an' a glass o' milk too. Honest, Racey, you'd oughta be more careful how you mix yore drinks."

"Don't try to be a bigger jack than yuh are," Racey adjured him in a tone that he strove to make contemptuous. "You think yo're awful funny—just too awful funny, don't yuh? I'm askin' you, you fish-faced ape, whose hoss this is I got here?"

"Don't you know?" grinned Piney, elevating both eyebrows. "Lordy, I wouldn't be in yore shoes for somethin'. Nawsir. She'll snatch you bald-headed, she will. The old lady was wild when she come out an' found her good hoss missin'. An' she shore said what she thought of you some more when she seen she had to ride home on that old crow's dinner of a moth-eaten accordeen of yores you left behind."

Racey Dawson was too reduced in spirit properly to take umbrage at this insult to his horse. He could only repeat his request that Piney make not of himself a bigger fool than usual. And when Piney did nothing but laugh immoderately, Racey grinned foolishly.

"If my head didn't ache so hard," he assured the chortling blacksmith, "I'd shore talk to you, but—say, lookit here, Piney, quit yore foolin', will yuh? Who owns this hoss anyway?"

"Here comes Kansas," said Piney. "Betcha five even he arrests you for a hoss-thief."

"Gimme odds an' I'll go yuh," Racey returned promptly.

"Even," stuck out Piney.

"Naw, he might do it. You Farewell jiggers hang together too hard for me to take any chances. 'Lo, Kansas."

"Howdy, Racey," nodded Kansas Casey, the deputy sheriff. "How long you been rustlin' hosses?"

"A —— sight longer'n I like," Racey replied frankly. "Who *does* own this hoss?"

"Y' oughta asked that question yesterday," said Kansas severely, but with a twinkle in his black eyes that belied his tone. "This here would be mighty serious business for you if the sheriff was in town. Jake's so particular about bein' legal an' all. Yessir, Racey, old-timer, I expect you'd spend some time in the calaboose, if you wasn't lynched previous."

"Don't scare the poor feller," pleaded Piney in a tone of deepest compassion. "He'll be cryin' in a minute."

"In a minute I'll be doin' somethin' besides cry if you fellers don't stop yore funnin'. This is past a joke, an'——"

"Shore it's past a joke," Kansas concurred warmly, "an' I ain't funnin', not for a minute. You go give that hoss back, Racey, or you'll be sorry."

"Well, for —— sake tell me who to give it back to!" bawled Racey, and immediately batted his eyes and gingerly patted his head.

"Head ache?" queried Kansas. "I expect it might after last night. You go give that hoss back like a good boy."

So saying Kansas Casey turned his back and retreated rapidly in the direction of the Starlight Saloon.

Racey Dawson glared vindictively after the departing deputy. Then he switched his angry blue eyes to the blacksmith's smiling countenance.

"You can all," said Racey Dawson distinctly, "go plumb to ——."

THE TURNED the purloined pony on a dime and loped up the street, followed by the ribald laughter of Piney Jackson.

"They think they're so terrible funny,"

Racey muttered mournfully, as he dismounted and tied at the hitch-rail in front of the Happy Heart. "Now if I can only find Swing——"

But Swing Tunstall, it appeared on consulting the bartender, had gone off hunting him—Racey. The latter did not appeal to the bartender to divulge the name of the horse's owner. He had, he believed, furnished the local populace sufficient amusement for one day. He had a small drink for he felt that he needed a bracer and with the liquor he imbibed inspiration.

Miss Blythe, Mike Flynn's partner in the Blue Pigeon Store! She would know whose horse it was, for certainly the horse's owner had bought the undershirt and the stockings at the Blue Pigeon. Furthermore Miss Blythe looked like a right-minded individual. She would take no pleasure in deviling a man. Not she.

Racey Dawson set down his glass and hurried to the Blue Pigeon Store. Miss Blythe, at his entrance, ceased checking tomato-cans and came forward.

"Ma'am," said Racey, "will you come to the door a minute? No, no, don't be scared," he added as the lady drew back a step. "I'm kind of in trouble, an' I want you to help me out. I'm—my name's Racey Dawson, an' I used to ride for the Cross-in-a-box before I got a job up at the Bend. Jack Richie knows me. I ain't crazy—honest."

For Miss Blythe continued to look doubtful.

"I—" she began.

"Lookit," he interrupted. "Yesterday I got a heap drunk an' I rode off on somebody's hoss without meanin' to. I mean I thought it was my hoss an' it wasn't. An' I thought maybe you'd tell me who the hoss belongs to so's I can return him an' get mine back. She took mine, they tell me. Not that I blame her a mite," he added hastily.

Pretty Miss Blythe smiled suddenly.

"I did hear something about a switch in horses yesterday afternoon," she admitted. "But I thought Mr. Flynn said Tom Dowling was the man's name. Certainly I remember you now, Mr. Dawson, although at first your—your beard——"

"Yeah, I know," he put in hurriedly. "I ain't shaved since I left the Bend, an' I slept mostly on my face last night, but it's li'l ol' me all right behind the whiskers an' real estate. Yeah, that's the hoss yonder—the one next the pinto."

"I know the horse," said Miss Blythe, drawing back from the doorway. "It belongs to the Dales over at Moccasin Spring on Soogan Creek."

"Oh, I know them," Racey declared confidently; he had been at the Dales' precisely once. "The girl married Chuck Morgan. Shore, Mis' Dale's hoss, huh? I'll take it right back soon's I get shaved. I s'pose I'll have a jo-mightyful time explainin' it to the old lady."

"It isn't the mother's horse. It's the daughter's. She was in town yesterday."

"You mean Chuck's wife, Mis' Morgan?"

"I mean Miss Molly Dale, the other daughter."

"I didn't know they had another daughter," puzzled Racey, thinking of what Piney Jackson had said anent an "old lady." "They must 'a' kept her in the background when I was there that time. What is she—a old maid?"

"Oh, middle-aged, perhaps," was the straight-faced reply.

"Shucks, I might 'a' knowed it," grumbled Racey. "Middle-aged old maid! I know what they're like. I had one once for a school-teacher. I can feel her lickin's yet. She was the contrariest female I ever met. Shucks, I— Well, if I gotta, I gotta. Might's well get it over with now as later. Thanks, ma'am, for helpin' me out."

Racey Dawson shambled dejectedly forth to effect the feeding of Miss Molly Dale's horse at the hotel corral. For his own breakfast he went to Sing Luey's Canton Restaurant. Because, while Bill Lainey offered no objections to feeding the horse, Mrs. Lainey utterly refused to provide snacks at odd hours for good-for-nothing, stick-a-bed punchers who were too lazy to eat at the regular meal-time. So there now.

"But I ain't gonna shave," he told himself, as he disposed of fried steak and potatoes sloshed down by several cups of coffee. "If she's a old maid like they say, it don't matter how tough I look."

HE WAS reflectively stirring the grounds in the bottom of his sixth cup when a small and frightened yellow dog dashed into the restaurant and fled underneath Racey's table where he cowered next to Racey's boots and cuddled a lop-eared head against Racey's knee.

Racey had barely time to glance down and discover that the yellow nondescript was no more than a pup when a burly youth charged into the restaurant and demanded in no uncertain tones to know where that adjective dog had hidden himself.

Racey took an instant dislike to the burly youth; still it was his dog. And it is a custom of the country to let every man, as the saying is, skin his own deer. He who takes exception to this custom and horns in on what can not rightfully be termed his particular business, will find public opinion dead against him and his journey unseasonably full of incident.

Racey moved a leg. "This him, stranger?"

The burly youth—it was evident that he was not wholly sober—glared at Racey Dawson.

"Shore it's him!" he declared. "What —— you hidin' him for? Get outa the way!"

Whereupon the burly youth advanced upon Racey.

This was different. Oh, quite. The burly youth had by his brusk manner and rude remarks included Racey in his—the burly youth's—business.

Racey met the burly youth rather more than half-way. He hit him so hard on the nose that the other flipped backward through the doorway and landed on his ear on the sidewalk.

Racey followed him out. The burly youth, bleeding copiously from the nose, sat up and fumbled uncertainly for his gun.

"No," said Racey with decision, aiming his six-shooter at the word. "You leave that gun alone, an' lemme tell you, stranger, while we're together that I want to buy that pup of yores. A gent like you ain't fit company for a self-respectin' dog to associate with. Nawsir."

"You got the drop," grumbled the burly youth.

"Which is one on you," Racey observed good-humoredly.

"Maybe I'll be seein' you again," suggested the other.

"Don't lemme see you first," advised Racey. "Never mind gettin' up. Just sit nice an' quiet like a good boy, an' keep the li'l hands spread out all so pretty with the thumbs locked over yore head. 'At's the boy. How much for yore dog, feller?"

"What you done to my dog?" A woman's voice broke on Racey's ears. But he did not remove his slightly narrowed eyes from the face of the burly youth.

"What you done to my dog?"

The question was repeated and the speaker came close to the burly youth and looked down at him. Now that the woman was within his range of vision, Racey perceived that she was the Happy Heart lookout, a good-looking creature with brown hair and a lithe figure.

The girl's fists were clenched so tightly that her knuckles showed white against the pink. Two red spots flared on the white skin of her cheeks.

"—— yore soul!" swore the lady. "I want my dog! How many times I gotta ask yuh, huh? Where is he? Say somethin', you dumb lump of slumgullion!"

"He ain't yore dog!" denied the burly youth. "He never was yores! He's mine, you ——!"

Which last was putting it pretty strongly, even for the time, the place and the girl. She promptly swung a brisk right toe, kicked the burly youth under the chin and flattened him out.

"That'll learn you to call me names," she snarled. "So long as I act like a lady, I'm a-gonna be treated like one, an' I'll break the neck of the man who acts different, an' you can stick a pin in that, you dirty-mouthed beast!"

Muttering profanely true to form, the aforementioned beast essayed to rise. But here again Racey and his ready gun held him to the ground in a sitting position.

"You leave her alone," commanded Racey. "You got what was comin' to yuh. Let it go at that. The lady says it's her dog anyway."

"It's my dog I tell yuh! I——"

"Yo're a liar!" averred the girl. "You kicked the dog out when he was sick an' I took him in an' tended him an' got him well. If that don't make him my dog what does?"

"Correct," said Racey. "Call him."

The girl put two fingers in her mouth and whistled shrilly. Forth from the Canton came the dog on the jump and bounced into the girl's arms and began to lick her ear with dispatch and enthusiasm.

"You see how it is," Racey indicated to the man on the ground. "It's the lady's dog. You can go now."

The burly youth stared stupidly.

"You heard what I said," Racey told him impatiently. "G'on. Go some'ers else. Get outa here."

"Say," remarked the burly youth in what was intended to be a menacing growl, "this party ain't over yet."

"Ain't you been enough of a fool already today?" interrupted Racey. "You ain't asking for it, are you?"

"You can't run no blazer on me," denied the other furiously.

Racey promptly holstered his six-shooter. "Now's yore best time," he said quietly.

WHEN the smoke cleared away there was a rent in the sleeve of Racey's shirt and the burly youth sat rocking his body to and fro and groaning through gritted teeth. For there was a red-hot hole in his right shoulder, which hurt him considerably.

Racey Dawson gazed dumbly down at the muzzle of his six-shooter, from which a slim curl of gray smoke spiraled lazily upward. Then his eyes veered to the man he had shot and to the man's six-shooter lying on the edge of the sidewalk. It too, like his own gun, was thinly smoking at the muzzle. The burly youth put a hand to his shoulder. The fingers came away red. Racey was glad he had not killed him. He had not intended to. But accidents will happen.

He stepped forward and kicked the burly youth's discarded six-shooter into the middle of the street. He looked about him. The girl and her dog had vanished.

Kansas Casey had taken her place apparently. From windows and doorways along the street peered interested faces. One knew that they were interested despite their careful lack of all expression. It is never well openly to express approval of a shooting. The shootee undoubtedly has friends, and little breaches of etiquette are always remembered.

Racey Dawson looked at Kansas Casey and shoved his six-shooter down into its holster.

"It was a even break," announced Racey.

"Shore," Kansas nodded. "I seen it. There'll be no trouble—from us," he added significantly.

The deputy sheriff knelt beside the wounded man. Racey Dawson went into the Happy Heart. He felt that he needed a drink. When he came out five minutes later the burly youth had been carried away. Remained a stain of dark red on the sidewalk where he had been sitting.

Piggy Wadsworth, the plump owner of the dance-hall, legs wide-spread and arms akimbo, was inspecting the red stain thoughtfully. He was joined by the store-keeper, Calloway, and two other men. None of them was aware of Racey Dawson standing in front of the Happy Heart.

"Was it there?" inquired Calloway.

"Yeah," said Piggy. "Right there. I seen the whole fraycas. Racey stood here an'——"

At this point Racey Dawson went elsewhere.

CHAPTER III

A WARNING

"YOU'LL have to manage it yoreself." Lanpher, the manager of the 88 ranch was speaking, and there was finality in his tone.

"You mean you don't wanna appear in the deal a-tall," sneered his companion.

Racey Dawson, who had been kneeling on the ground engaged in bandaging a cut from a kick on the near fore-leg of the Dale pony when the two men led their horses into the corral, craned his neck past the pony's chest and glanced at Lanpher's companion. For the latter's words provoked curiosity. What species of deal was toward? Having ridden for Lanpher in the days preceding his employment by the Cross-in-a-box and consequently provided with many opportunities for studying the gentleman at arm's-length, Racey naturally assumed that the deal was a shady one.

Personally, he believed Lanpher capable of anything. Which of course was unjust to the manager. His courage was not quite sufficient to hold him abreast of the masters in wickedness. But he was mean and cruel in a slimy way, and if left alone was prone to make life miserable for some one. Invariably the some one was incapable of proper defense. From Farewell to Marysville, throughout the length and breadth of the great Lazy River country, Lanpher was known unfavorably and disliked accordingly.

To his companion's sneering remark Lanpher made no intelligible reply. He merely grunted as he reached for the gate to pull it shut. His companion half-turned—his back had from the first been toward Racey Dawson—and Racey perceived the cold and Roman profile of a long-jawed head. Then the man turned full in his direction and behold, the hard features vanished, and the man displayed a good-looking countenance of singular charm. The chin was a thought too wide and heavy, a trait it shared in common with the mouth, but otherwise the stranger's full face would have found favor in the eyes of almost any woman, however critical.

Racey Dawson, at first minded to reveal his presence in the corral, thought better of it almost immediately. While not by habit an eavesdropper he felt no shame in fortuitously overhearing anything Lanpher or the stranger might be moved to say. Lanpher merited no consideration under any circumstances, and the stranger, in appearance a similar breed of dog as far as morals went, certainly deserved no better treatment. So Racey remained quietly where he was, and was glad that besides the pony to which he was ministering there were several others between him and the men at the gate.

"Why don't yuh wanna appear in this business?" persisted the stranger, pivoting on one heel in order to keep face to face with Lanpher.

"I gotta live here," was the Lanpher reply.

"Well, ain't I gotta live here too, an' I don't see anythin' round here to worry me. S'pose old Chin Whisker does go on the prod. What can he do?"

"'T'sall right," mumbled Lanpher, shutting the gate and shoving home the bar. "You don't know this country as well as I do. I got trouble enough runnin' the 88 without borrowin' any more."

"Now I told yuh I was gonna get his li'l ranch peaceable if I could. I got it all planned out. I don't do anythin' rough unless I gotta. But I'm gonna get old Chin Whisker out o' there, an' you can stick a pin in that."

"'T'sall right. 'T'sall right. You wanna remember ol' Chin Whisker ain't the only hoss yo're tryin' to ride. If you think that other outfit is gonna watch you pick daisies in their front yard without doin' anythin', you got another guess. But I'll do what I said an' no more."

"I s'pose you think that by stickin' away off yonder where the grass is long nobody will suspicion you. If you do, yo're crazy. Folks ain't so cross-brained as all that. Yo're in it from soda to hock, an' don't you forget it."

"Not so —— loud!" Lanpher cautioned excitedly.

"Say, whatsa matter with you?" demanded the stranger, leaning back against the gate and spreading his long arms along the top bar. "Which yo're the most nervous gent I ever did see. The hotel ain't close enough for anybody to hear a word, an' there's only hosses in the corral. Get a-hold of yoreself. Don't be so skittish."

"I ain't skittish. I'm sensible. I know—" Lanpher broke off abruptly.

"Whadda you know?"

"What yo're due to find out."

"Now lookit here, Mr. Lanpher," said the stranger in a low cold tone. "You said them last words a leetle too gayful to suit me. If yo're plannin' any deviltry—don't."

"I ain't. Not a bit of it. But I got my duty to my company. I can't get mixed up in no fraycas on yore account because if I do my ranch will lose money. That's the flat of it."

"Oh, it is, huh? Yore ranch will lose money if you back me up, hey? An' you ain't thinkin' nothin' of yore precious skin, are yuh? Oh, no, not a-tall. I wonder what yore company would say to the li'l deal between you an' me that started this business. I wonder what they'd think o' Mr. Lanpher an' his sense o' duty. Yeah, I would wonder a whole lot."

"Well—" began Lanpher lamely.

"——!" snarled the stranger. "You make me sick! Now you listen to me. Yo're in this as deep as I am. If you think you ain't, try to pull yore wagon out. Just try, thassall."

"I ain't doin' none of the work, that's flat," Lanpher denied doggedly.

"You gotta back me up alla same," declared the stranger.

"That wasn't in the bargain," fenced Lanpher.

"It is now," chuckled the stranger. "If I lose, you lose too. Lookit," he added in a more conciliatory tone. "Can't you see how it is? I need you, an' you need me. All I'm askin' of you is to back me up when I want yuh to. Outside o' that yuh can sit on yore shoulder-blades an' enjoy life."

"We didn't bargain on that," barked back Lanpher.

"But that was then, an' this is now. Which may not be logic, but it is necessity, an' Necessity, Mr. Lanpher, is the mother of all kinds of funny things. So you an' I, we got to ride together."

Lanpher pushed back his hat and looked over the hills and far away. The well-known carking care was written large upon his countenance. Slowly his eyes slid round to meet for a brief moment the eyes of his companion.

"I can't answer for my men," said Lanpher shortly.

"Can you answer for yoreself?" inquired the stranger quickly.

"I'll back you up." Grudgingly.

"Then that's all right. You can keep the men from throwin' in with the other side anyway, can't yuh?"

"I can do that much."

"Which is quite a lot for a ranch manager to be able to do," was the stranger's blandly sarcastic observation. "C'mon. We've gassed so much I'm dry as a covered bridge. I—what does Thompson want now? 'Lo, Punch."

"'Lo, Jack. Howdy, Lanpher." Racey could not see the newcomer, but he recognized the voice. It was that of Punch-the-breeze Thompson, a gentleman well known to make his living by the ingenious capitalization of an utter lack of moral virtue. "Say, Jack," continued Thompson, "Nebraska has been plugged."

"Plugged?" Great amazement on the part of the stranger.

"Plugged."

"Who done it?"

"Feller by the name of Dawson."

"Racey Dawson?" nipped in Lanpher.

"Yeah, him."

Lanpher chuckled slightly.

"Why the laugh?" asked Jack Harpe.

"I'd always thought Nebraska could shoot."

"Nebraska is supposed to be some swift," admitted the stranger. "How'd it happen, Punch?"

Thompson told him and on the whole gave a truthful account.

"What kind o' feller is this Dawson?" the stranger inquired after a moment's silence following the close of the story.

"A skipjack of a no-account cow-wrastler," promptly replied Lanpher. "He thinks he's —— on the Wabash."

"Allasame he must be old pie to put the kibosh on Nebraska thataway."

"Luck," sneered Lanpher. "Just luck."

"Is he square?" probed the stranger.

"Square as a billiard-ball," said Lanpher. "Why, Jack, he's so crooked he can't lay in bed straight."

At which Racey Dawson was moved to rise and declare himself. Then the humor of it struck him. He grinned and hunkered down, his ears on the stretch.

"Well," said the stranger, refraining from comment on Lanpher's estimate of the Dawson qualities, "we'll have to get somebody in Nebraska's place."

"I'm as good as Nebraska," Punch-the-breeze Thompson stated modestly.

"No," the stranger said decidedly. "Yo're all right, Punch. But even if we can get old Chin Whisker drunk, the hand has gotta be quicker than the eye. Y' understand?"

Thompson, it appeared, did understand. He grunted sulkily.

"We'll have to give Peaches Austin a show," resumed the stranger. "Nev' mine givin' me a argument, Punch. I said I'd use Austin. C'mon, le's go get a drink."

THE three men moved away. Racey Dawson cautiously eased his long body up from behind the pony. With slightly narrowed eyes he stared at the gate behind which Jack Harpe and his two friends had been standing.

"Now I wonder," mused Racey Dawson, "I shore am wonderin' what kind of skulduggery li'l Mr. Lanpher of the 88 is a-tryin' to crawl out of an' what Mr. Stranger is a-tryin' to drag him into. Nebraska too, huh? I was wonderin' what that feller's name was."

He knelt down again and swiftly completed the bandaging of the cut on the pony's near fore-leg. As he rode round the corner of the hotel to reach Main Street he saw Luke Tweezy single-footing into town from the south. The powdery dust of the trail filled in and overlaid the lines and creases of Luke Tweezy's foxy-nosed and leathery visage. Layers of dust almost completely concealed the original color of the caked and matted hide of Luke Tweezy's well-conditioned horse. It was evident that Luke Tweezy had come from afar.

In common with most range-riders Racey Dawson possessed an automatic eye to detail. Quite without conscious effort his brain registered and filed away in the card-index of his subconscious mind the picture presented by the passing of Luke Tweezy, the impression made thereby, and the inference drawn therefrom.

The inference was almost trivial—merely that Luke Tweezy had come from Marysville, the town where he lived and had his being. But triviality is frequently paradoxical and always relative. If Dundee had not raised an arm to urge his troopers on at Killiekrankie the world would know a different England. A single thread it was that solved for Theseus the mystery of the Cretan labyrinth.

Racey Dawson did not like Luke Tweezy. From the sparse and sandy strands of the Tweezy hair to the long and varied lines of the Tweezy business there was nothing about Mr. Tweezy that he did like. For Luke Tweezy's business was ready money and its possibilities. He drove hard bargains with his neighbors and harder ones with strangers. He bought county scrip at a liberal discount and lent his profits to the needy at the highest rate allowed by law.

Luke Tweezy's knowledge of what was allowed by territorial law was not limited to money-lending. He had been admitted to the bar, and no case was too small, too large or too filthy for him to handle.

In his dislike of Luke Tweezy, Racey Dawson was not solitary. Luke Tweezy was as generally unpopular as Lanpher of the 88. But there was a difference. Where Lanpher's list of acquaintances, nodding and otherwise, was necessarily confined to the Lazy River country, Luke Tweezy knew almost every man, woman and child in the territory. It was his business to know everybody, and Luke Tweezy was always attending to his business.

He had nodded and spoken to Racey Dawson as they two passed, and Racey had returned the greeting gravely.

"Slimy ol' he-buzzard," Racey Dawson observed to himself and reached for his tobacco.

But there was no tobacco. The sack that he knew he had put in his vest pocket after breakfast had vanished. Lack of tobacco is a serious matter. Racey wheeled his mount and spurred to the Blue Pigeon Store.

Five minutes later, smoking a grateful cigaret, he again started to ride out of town. As he curved his horse round a freight-wagon in front of the Blue Pigeon he saw three men issue from the doorway of the Happy Heart Saloon. Two of the men were Lanpher and the stranger. The third was Luke Tweezy. The latter stopped at the saloon hitching-rail to untie his horse.

"See yuh later, Luke," the stranger flung over his shoulder to Luke Tweezy as he passed on. He and Lanpher headed diagonally across the street toward the hotel. It seemed odd to Racey Dawson that Luke Tweezy by no word or sign made acknowledgment of the stranger's remark.

Racey tickled his mount with the rowels of one spur and stirred him into a trot. Have to be moving along if he wanted to get there some time that day. He wished he didn't have to go alone, so he did. The old lady would surely lay him out, and he wished for company to share his misery.

Why couldn't Swing Tunstall have stayed reasonably in Farewell instead of traipsing off over the range like a tomfool? Might not be back for a week, Swing mightn't. Idiotic caper—with other adjectives—of Swing's anyway. Why hadn't he used his head? Oh, Racey Dawson was an exceedingly irritable young man as he rode out of Farewell. The aches and pains were still throbbingly alive in his own particular head. The immediate future was not alluring. It was a hard world.

When he and his mount were breasting the first slight rise of the northern slope of Indian Ridge—which ridge marks with its long broad-backed bulk the southern boundary of the flats south of Farewell and forces the Marysville trail to travel five miles to go two—a rider emerged from a small boulder-strewn draw wherein tamaracks grew thinly.

Racey stared—and forgot his irritation and his headache. The draw was not more than a quarter-mile distant, and he perceived without difficulty that the rider was a woman. She quirted her mount into a gallop, and then seesawed her right arm vigorously. Above the pattering drum of her horse's hoofs a shout came faintly to his ears. He pulled up and waited.

When the woman was close to him he

saw that it was the good-looking, brown-haired Happy Heart lookout, the girl whose dog he had protected. She dragged her horse to a halt at his side and smiled. And, oddly enough, it was an amazingly sweet smile. It had nothing in common with the hard smile of her profession.

"I'm sorry I had to leave without thankin' yuh for what yuh done for me back there," said she with a jerk of her head toward distant Farewell.

"Why, that's all right," Racey told her awkwardly.

"It meant a lot to me," she went on, her smile fading. "You wouldn't let that feller hurt me or my dog, an' I think the world of that dog."

"Yeah." Thus Racey, very much embarrassed by her gratitude and quite at a loss as to the proper thing to say.

"Yes, an' I'm shore grateful, stranger. I—I won't forget it. That dog he likes me, he does. An' I'm teachin' him tricks. He's awful cunnin'. An' company! Say, when I'm feelin' rotten that there dog knows, an' he climbs up in my lap an' licks my ear an' tries his best to be a comfort. I tell yuh that dog likes me, an' that means a whole lot—to me. I—I ain't forgettin' it."

Her face was dark red. She dropped her head and began to fumble with her reins.

"You needn't 'a' come ridin' alla way out here just for this," chided Racey, feeling that he must say something to relieve the situation.

"It wasn't only this," she denied tiredly. "They was somethin' else. An' I couldn't talk to yuh in Farewell without him an' his friends findin' it out. That's why I borrowed one o' Mike Flynn's hosses an' followed yuh thisaway—so's we could be private. Le's ride along. I expect you was goin' somewhere."

THEY rode southward side by side a space of time in silence. Racey had nothing to say. He was too busy speculating as to the true significance of the girl's presence. What did she want—money?

These saloon floozies always did. He hoped she wouldn't want much. For he ruefully knew himself to be a soft-hearted fool that was never able to resist a woman's appeal. He glanced at her covertly. Her little chin was trembling. Poor kid! That was all she was. Just a kid. Fierce life for a kid. Shucks!

"Lookit here," said Racey suddenly, "you in hard luck, huh? Don't yuh worry. Yore luck is bound to turn. It always does. How much yuh want?"

So saying he slid a hand into a side pocket of his trousers. The girl shook her head without looking at him.

"It ain't money," she said dully. "I make enough to keep me goin'." Then with a curious flash of temper she continued:

"That's always the way with a man, ain't it? If he thinks yo're in trouble—give her some money. If yo're sick—give her money. If yo're dyin'—give her money. Money! Money! Money! I'm so sick o' money I— Don't mind me, stranger. I don't mean nothin'. I'm a—a li'l upset today. I— It's hard for me to begin."

"Begin!" What was the girl driving at?

"Yes," said she, "begin. It's hard. I ain't no snitch. I never was, even when I hadn't no use for a man—like now. But—but you stuck up for me an' my dog, an' I gotta pay you back. I gotta. Listen," she pursued swiftly. "Do you know who that feller was you shot?"

"No," Racey shook his head. "But you don't owe me nothin'. Forget it. I dunno what yo're drivin' at, an' I don't wanna know if it bothers yuh to tell me. But if I can do anythin'—anythin' a-tall to help yuh, why then tell me."

"I know," she nodded. "You'd always help a feller. Yo're that kind. But I'm all right. That jigger you plugged is Tom Jones."

The girl looked at Racey Dawson as though the name of Tom Jones should be informative of much. But, Fielding's excluded, there are many Tom Joneses. Racey did not react.

"Dunno him," said Racey Dawson. "I heard his name was Nebraska."

"Nebraska the boys called him," she amplified. "He used to be foreman of the Currycomb outfit south of Fort Seymour."

"I've heard o' Nebraska Jones an' the Currycomb bunch all right," he admitted soberly. "An' I'd shore like to know what was the matter with Nebraska today."

"So would I. You was lucky."

Racey nodded absently. The Currycomb outfit! That charming aggregation of gunfighters had borne the hardest reputation extant in a neighboring territory. Regarding the Currycomb men had been accustomed to speak behind their hands and under their breaths. For the Currycomb politically had been a power. Which perhaps was the reason why, although the rustling of many and many a cow and the killing of more than one man were laid at their unfriendly door, nothing had ever been proved against them.

They had prospered exceedingly, these Currycomb boys, till the election of an opposition sheriff. Which election had put heart into the more decent set and a crimp in the Currycomb. It did not matter that legally the Currycomb possessed a clean bill of health. The community had decided that the Currycomb must be abolished. It was—cow, cayuse and cowboy.

While some had remained on the premises at an approximate depth beneath the grass of two feet—for the ground was hard—the other Currycombers had scattered wide and far and their accustomed places knew them no more.

Now it seemed that at least one of the Currycomb boys, and that one the most notorious character of the lot, had scattered as far as Farewell and obtruded his personality upon that of Racey Dawson. Nebraska Jones! A cold smile stretched the corners of Racey's mouth, as he thought on what he had done. He had beaten to the draw the foreman of the Currycomb. Which undoubtedly must have been the first time Nebraska had ever been shaded.

The girl was watching his face. "Don't begin to get the notion you beat him to it," she advised, divining his thought. "He was stunned sort of that first time, an' the second time his gun caught a little. Nebraska is slow lightnin' on the pull. Keep thinkin' you was lucky like you done at first."

Racey laughed shamefacedly. "Yo're too much of a mind-reader for me. But what you tellin' all this to me for? I ain't the sheriff with a warrant for Nebraska Jones."

"I'm tellin' yuh so yuh'll know what to expect. So yuh'll get out of town an' stay out. 'Cause, shore as yo're a foot high, you won't live a minute longer than is plumb necessary if you don't."

"I beat Nebraska once an' he won't get well o' that lead in the shoulder so jo-awful soon."

"Can you beat a shot in the dark? Can you locate a knife in the night? It ain't a question of Nebraska Jones himself. It's the gang he's managed to pick up in this town. They are meaner than a nest of cross rattlesnakes. I know 'em. I know what they'll do. Right this minute they're fixin' up some way to give yuh yore comeuppance."

"Think so?"

"Think so? Say, would I come traipsin' out here just for my health or yores? Figure it out."

"Seems like you know a lot about Nebraska an' his gang," he said at a venture, glancing at her sharply.

"I lived with Nebraska—for a while," she said matter-of-factly, giving him a calm stare. "Li'l Marie knows all they is to know about Nebraska Jones—an' a little bit more. Which goes double for his gang."

"Shucks," Racey grunted contemptuously. "Does he an' his gang run Farewell? I'd always thought Farewell was a man's size town."

"They're careful," explained the girl. "They got sense enough not to run any blazers they can't back to the limit. Yeah, they're careful—now."

"Now, huh? Later, when they've filled their hands an' there's more of 'em playin', they might not be so careful, huh Marie?"

"Unless yo're a heap careful right now you won't have a thing to do with 'later,'" she parried. "You do like I say, Mister Man. I ain't a bit anxious to see you wiped out."

"Wipin' me out would shore cramp my style," he admitted. "I——"

At this juncture hoof-beats sounded sharply on the trail behind them. Racey turned in a flash, his right hand dropping. But it was only Lanpher and the stranger riding out of a belt of pines whose deep and lusty soughing had drowned the noise of their approach.

LANPHER and his comrade rode by at a trot. The former mumbled a greeting to Racey, but barely glanced at the girl. Women did not interest Lanpher. He was too selfishly stingy. The stranger was more appreciative. He gave the girl a stare of frank admiration before he looked at Racey Dawson. The latter perceived that the stranger's eyes were remarkably black and keen, perceived too that the man as he rode past half-turned in the saddle for a second look at the girl.

"Who's yore friend?" asked Marie, an insolent lift to her upper lip and a slightly puzzled look in her brown eyes as her gaze followed the stranger and Lanpher.

"Friend?" said Racey. "Speakin' personal now, I ain't lost either of 'em."

"I know who Lanpher is," she told him impatiently. "I meant the other."

"I'll never tell yuh. I dunno him."

"I think I've seen him somewhere—some time. I can't remember where or how—I see so many men— There! I almost had it. Gone again now. Don't it make yuh sick when things get away from you like that? Makes yuh think yo're a-losin' yore mind almost."

"He looked at you almighty strong," proffered Racey. "Maybe he'll remember. Why don't yuh ask him?"

"Maybe I will at that," said she.

"Didja know he was a friend of Nebraska's?" he asked, watching her face keenly.

She shook her head.

"Nebraska knows a lot of folks," she said indifferently.

"He knows Punch-the-breeze Thompson too."

"Likely he would, knowin' Nebraska. He belongs to Nebraska's bunch."

"What does Nebraska do for a livin'?"

"Everbody an' anythin'. Mostly he deals a game in the Starlight."

"What does Peaches Austin work at?" he pursued, thinking that it might be well to learn what he could of the enemy's habits.

"He deals another game in the Happy Heart."

" 'The hand is quicker than the eye,' " he quoted cynically, recalling what the stranger had said to Punch-the-breeze Thompson.

"Oh, Peaches is slick enough," said she, comprehending instantly. "But Nebraska is slicker. Don't never sit into no game with Nebraska Jones. Lookit here," she added, her expression turning suddenly anxious, "did I take my ride for nothin'?"

"Huh? Oh, that! Shore not. I'm obliged to yuh, you bet yuh, an' I hope I can do as much for you some day. But I wasn't figurin' on stayin' here any length of time. Swing—he's my friend—an me' are goin' down to try Arizona a spell. We'll be pullin' out tomorrow, I expect."

"Then all you got to look out for is tonight. But I'm tellin' yuh yuh better drag it tomorrow, shore."

Racey smiled slowly. "If it wasn't I got business down south I'd admire to stay. I ain't leavin' a place just 'cause I ain't popular, not nohow. I'm over twenty-one. I got my growth."

"It don't matter why yuh go. Yo're a-goin'. That's enough. It's a good thing for you you got business, an' you can stick a pin in that."

"I'll have to do somethin' about them friends of his alla same, before I go," Racey said thoughtfully.

"Huh?" Perplexedly.

"Yeah. If they're a-hornin' to bushwhack me for what I done to Nebraska, it ain't fair for me to go siftin' off thisaway an' not give 'em some kind of a run for their alley. Look at it close. You can see it ain't."

"I don't see nothin'."

"Shore yuh do. It would give 'em too much of a chance to talk. They might even get to sayin' they run me out o' town. An' the more I think of it the more I'm shore they'll be sayin' just that."

"But you said you was goin' away. You said you had business in Arizona."

"Shore I have, an' shore I'm goin'. But first I gotta give Nebraska's friends a chance to draw cards. A chance, y' understand."

"You'll be killed," she told him, white-lipped.

"Why no," said he. "Not never a-tall. Drawin' cards is one thing an' playin' the hand out is a cat with another kind of tail. I got hopes they won't get too rough with me."

"Well, of all the stubborn fools I ever see—" began the girl angrily.

At which Racey Dawson laughed aloud.

"That's all right," she snapped. "You can laugh. Might 'a' knowed you would. A man is such a plumb idjit. A feller does all she can to show him the right trail out, an' does he take it? He does not. He laughs. That's what he does. He laughs. He thinks it's funny. You gimme a pain, you do."

On the instant she jerked her pony round, whirled her quirt cross-handed, and tore down the back-trail at full gallop.

"Aw ——" said Racey, looking after

the fleeing damsel regretfully. "I clean forgot to ask her about the rest of Nebraska's friends."

CHAPTER IV

THE OLD LADY

"HOPE Old Man Dale is home," said Racey to himself when he saw ahead of him the grove of cottonwoods marking the location of Moccasin Spring. "But he won't be," he added lugubriously. "I never did have no luck."

He passed the grove of trees and opened up the prospect of house and stable and corral with cottonwood and willow-bordered Soogan Creek in the background.

"Changed some since I was here last," he muttered in wonder. For nesters as a rule do not go in for flowers and shrubs. And here, besides a small truck-garden, were both—all giving evidence of much care and attention.

Racey dismounted at the corral and approached the kitchen door. A fresh young voice in the kitchen was singing a song to the brave accompaniment of a twanging banjo:

"When I was a-goin' down the road
With a tired team an' a heavy load,
I cracked my whip an' the leader sprung,
An' he almost busted the wagon-tongue.
Turkey in the straw, ha, ha, ha,
Turkey in ——"

The singing stopped in the middle of a line. The banjo went silent in the middle of a bar. Racey looked in at the kitchen door and saw, sitting on a corner of the kitchen table, a very pretty girl. One knee was crossed over the other; in her lap was the mute banjo, and she was looking straight at him.

Racey, heartily and internally cursing himself for having neglected to shave, pulled off his hat and achieved a head-bob.

"Good morning," said the pretty girl, putting up a slim tanned hand and tucking in behind a well-set ear a strayed lock of black hair.

"Mornin'," said Racey, and decided then and there that he had never before seen eyes of such a deep, deep blue, or a mouth so alluringly red.

"What," said the pretty girl, laying the banjo on the table and sliding down till her feet touched the floor, "what can I do for you?"

"Nun-nothin'," stuttered the rattled Racey, clasping his hat to his bosom, so that he could button unseen the top button of his shirt, "except cuc-can yuh find Miss Dale for me? Is she home?"

"Mother's out. So's father. I'm the only one home."

"It's yore sister I want, *Miss* Dale—yore oldest sister."

"You must mean Mrs. Morgan. She lives——"

"No, I don't mean her. Yore oldest sister—Miss. Her whose hoss was took by mistake in Farewell yesterday."

"That was my horse."

"Yores! But they said it was a old lady's hoss! Are you shore it——"

"Of course I'm sure. Did you bring him back? Where? The corral?"

The girl walked swiftly to the window, took one glance at the bay horse tied to the corral gate, and returned to the table.

"Certainly that's my horse," she reiterated with the slightest of smiles.

Racey Dawson stared at her in horror. Her horse! He had actually run off with the horse of this beautiful being. He had thereby caused inconvenience to this angel. If he could only crawl off somewhere and pass away quietly. At the moment, by his own valuation, any one buying him for a nickel would have been liberally overcharged. Her horse!

"I—I took yore hoss," he spoke up desperately. "I'm Racey Dawson."

"So you're the man—" she began and stopped.

He nodded miserably, his contrite eyes on the toes of her shoes. Small shoes they were. Cheerfully would he have lain down right there on the floor and let her wipe those self-same shoes upon him. It would have been a positive pleasure. He felt so worm-like he almost wriggled. Slowly, oh, very slowly, he lifted his eyes to her face.

"I—I was drunk," he confessed, hoping that an honest confession would restrain her from casting him into outer darkness.

"I heard you were," she admitted.

"I thought it was yore oldest sister's pony," he fumbled on, feeling it incumbent upon him to say something. "They told me somethin' about a old lady."

"Jane Morgan's the only older sister I have. Who told you this wild tale?"

"Them," was his vague reply. He was not the man to give away the jokers of Farewell. Old lady indeed! Miss Blythe to the contrary notwithstanding, this girl was not within sight of middle-age.

"Yeah," he went on, "they shore fooled me. Told me I'd took a old maid's hoss, an'——"

"Oh, as far as that goes," said the girl, her long eyelashes demurely drooping, "they told you the truth. I'm an old maid."

"You? Shucks!" Hugely contemptuous.

"Oh, but I am," she insisted, raising her eyes and tilting sidewise her charming head. "I'm not married."

"Thank—" he began impulsively, but choked on the second word and gulped hard. "I mean," he resumed hastily, "I don't understand why I never seen you before. I was here once, but you wasn't around."

"When were you here? Why, that was two years ago. I was only a kid then—all legs like a calf. No wonder you didn't notice me."

She laughed at him frankly with a bewildering flash of white teeth.

"I shore must 'a' been blind," he said truthfully. "They ain't no two ways about that."

Under his admiring gaze a slow blush overspread her smooth cheeks. She laughed again—uncertainly, and burst into swift speech:

"My manners! What have I been thinking of? Mr. Dawson, please sit down, do. I know you must be tired after your long ride. Take that chair under the mirror. It's the strongest. You can tip it back against the wall if you like. I'll get you a cup of coffee. I know you're thirsty. I'm sorry mother and father aren't home, but mother drove over to the Bar S on business and I don't know where father went."

"I ain't fit to stay," hesitated Racey, rasping the back of his hand across his stubbly chin.

"Nonsense. You sit right down while I grind the coffee. I'll have you a potful in no time. I make pretty good coffee if I do say it myself."

"I'll bet you do."

"But my sister Jane makes better. You'll get some of hers at dinner."

"Dinner?" He stared blankly.

"Of course, dinner. When mother and father are away I always go down there for my meals. It's only a quarter-mile down-stream. Shorter if you climb that ridge. But it's so stony I generally go along the creek-bank where I can gallop—What? Why, of course you're going with me. Jane would never forgive me if I didn't bring you.

"And what would Chuck say if you came this far and then didn't go on down to his house? Don't you suppose he enjoys seeing his old friends? It was only last week I heard him wonder to father if you were ever coming back to this country. How did you like it up at the Bend?"

"Right fine," he told her, settling himself comfortably in the chair she had indicated. "But a feller gets tired of one place after a while. I thought maybe I'd come back to the Lazy River an' get a job ridin' the range again."

"Aren't there any ranches round the Bend?" she asked, poking up the fire and setting on the coffee-pot.

"Plenty, but I—I like the Lazy River country," he told her. "Fort Creek County for yores truly, now an' hereafter."

In this fashion did the proposed journey to Arizona go glimmering. His eye lingered on the banjo where it lay on the table.

"Can you play it?" she asked, her eye following his.

"Some," said he. "Wanna hear a camp-meetin' song?"

She nodded. He rose and picked up the banjo. He placed a foot on the chair seat, slid the banjo to rest on his thigh, swept the strings and broke into "Inchin' Along." Which ditty made her laugh, for it is a funny song and he sang it well.

"That was fine," she told him when he had sung it through. "Your voice sounds a lot like that of a man I heard singing in Farewell yesterday. He was in the Happy Heart when I was going by, and he sang "Jog on, jog on the footpath way." If it hadn't been a saloon I'd have gone in. I just love the old songs."

"You do?" said he delightedly, with shining eyes. "Well, Miss Dale, that feller in the saloon was me an' old songs is where I live. I cut my teeth on 'The Barley Mow' an' grew up with 'Barbara Allen.' My mother, she used to sing 'em all. She was a great hand to sing an' she taught me. Know 'The Keel Row'?"

She didn't, so he sang it for her. And others he sang too: "The Merry Cuckoo" and "The Bailiff's Daughter." The last she liked so well that he sang it three times over and they quite forgot the coffee.

RACEY DAWSON was starting the second verse of "Sourwood Mountain" when some one without coughed apologetically. Racey stopped singing and looked toward the doorway. Standing on the sunken half-round log that served as a door-step was the stranger he had seen with Lanpher.

There was more than a hint of amusement in the black eyes with which the stranger was regarding Racey. The latter felt that the stranger was enjoying a hearty internal laugh at his expense. As probably he was. Racey looked at him from beneath level brows.

The lid of the stranger's right eye dropped ever so little. It was the merest of winks. yet it was unmistakable. It recalled their morning's meeting. More, it was the tolerant wink of a superior to an inferior. A wink that merited a kick? Quite so.

The keen black eyes veered from Racey to the girl. The man removed his hat and bowed with, it must be said, not a little grace. Miss Dale nodded coldly. The stranger smiled. It was marvelous how the magic of that smile augmented the attractive good looks of the stranger's full face. It was equally singular how that selfsame smile rendered more hawk-like than ever the hard and Roman profile of the fellow. It was precisely as if he were two different men at one and the same time.

"Does Mr. Dale live here?" inquired the stranger.

"He does." A breath from the Boreal Pole was in the two words uttered by Miss Dale.

The stranger's smile widened. The keen black eyes began to twinkle. He made as if to enter but went no farther than the placing of one foot on the door-sill.

"Is he home?"

"He isn't." Clear and colder.

"I'm shore sorry," grieved the stranger, the smile waning a trifle. "I wanted to see him."

"I supposed as much," sniffed Miss Dale uncordially.

"Yes, miss," said the stranger, undisturbed. "When will he be back, if I might ask?"

"Tonight—tomorrow. I'm not sure."

"So I see," nodded the stranger. "Would it be worth while my waitin'?"

"That depends on what you call worth while."

"Yo're right. It does. Standards ain't always alike, are they?"

He laughed silently, and pulled on his hat.

"An' it's a good thing standards ain't all alike," he resumed chattily. "Wouldn't it be a funny old world if they were?"

The smile of him recognized Racey briefly, but it rested upon and caressed the girl. She shook her shoulders as if she were ridding herself of the touch of hands.

The stranger continued to smile and to look as if he expected a reply. But he did not get it. Miss Dale stared calmly at him, through him.

Slowly the stranger slid his foot from the door-sill to the door-step. Slowly, very slowly, his keenly twinkling black gaze traveled over the girl from her face to her feet and up again finally to fasten upon and hold as with a tangible grip her angry blue eyes.

"I'm sorry yore pa ain't here," said he in a drawl. "I had some business. It can wait. I'll be back. So long."

The stranger turned and left them.

From the kitchen window they watched him mount his horse and ford the creek and ride away westward.

"I don't like that man," declared Miss Dale, and caught her lower lip between her white teeth. "I wonder what he wanted?"

"You'll find out when he comes back." Dryly.

"I hope he never comes back. I never want to see him again. Do you know him?"

"Not me. First time I ever saw him was this mornin' in Farewell. He was with Lanpher. When I was comin' out here him an' Lanpher caught up with me an' passed me."

"He didn't bring Lanpher here with him anyhow."

"He didn't for a fact," assented Racey Dawson, his eyes following the dwindling figures of the rider and his horse. "I wonder why?"

"I wonder too." Thus Miss Dale with a gurgling chuckle.

Both laughed. For Racey's sole visit to the Dale place had been made in company with Lanpher. The cause of said visit had been the rustling and butchering of an 88 cow, which Lanpher had ill-advisedly essayed to fasten upon Mr. Dale. But, due to the interference of Chuck Morgan, a Bar S rider, who later married Jane Dale, Lanpher's attempt had ben unavailing. It may be said in passing that Lanpher had suffered both physically and mentally because of that visit. Of course he had neither forgiven Chuck Morgan nor the Bar S for backing up its puncher, which it had done to the limit.

"I quit the 88 that day," Racey Dawson told the girl.

"I know you did. Chuck told me. Look at the time, will you? Get your hat. We mustn't keep Jane waiting."

"No," he said thoughtfully, his brows puckered, "we mustn't keep Jane waitin'. Lookit, Miss Dale. As I remember yore pa he had a mustache. Has he still got it?"

Miss Dale puzzled, paused in the doorway.

"Why, no," she told him. "He wears a horrid chin whisker now."

"He does, huh? A chin whisker. Let's be movin' right along. I think I got somethin' interestin' to tell you an' yore sister an' Chuck."

BUT they did not move along. They halted in the doorway. Or, rather, the girl halted in the doorway and Racey looked over her shoulder. What stopped them short in their tracks was a spectacle—the spectacle of an elderly chin-whiskered man, very drunk and disorderly, riding in on a paint pony.

"Father!" breathed Miss Dale in a horror-stricken whisper.

And as she spoke father uttered a string of cheerful whoops and topped off with a long pull at a bottle he had been brandishing in his right hand.

"Please go," said Miss Dale to Racey Dawson.

He hesitated. He was in a quandary. He did not relish leaving her with— At that instant Mr. Dale decided Racey's course for him. Mr. Dale pulled a gun and, still whooping cheerily, shook five shots into the atmosphere. Then Mr. Dale fumblingly threw out his cylinder and began to reload.

"I better get his gun away from him," Racey said apologetically over his shoulder as he ran forward.

But the old man would have none of him. He cunningly discerned an enemy in Racey and tried to shoot him. It was lucky for Racey that the old fellow was as drunk as a fiddle, or certainly Racey would have been buried the next day. As it was, the first bullet went wide by a yard. The second went straight up into the blue, for by then Racey had the old man's wrist.

"There, there," soothed Racey, "you don't want that gun. Nawsir. Not you. Le's have it, that's a good feller."

So speaking, he twisted the six-shooter from the old man's grasp and jammed it into the waistband of his own trousers.

The old man burst into frank tears. Incontinently he slid sidewise from the saddle and clasped Racey round the neck.

"I'm wild an' woolly an' full o' fleas,
I'm hard to curry below the knees."

Thus he caroled loudly two lines of the justly popular song.

"Luke," he bawled, switching from verse to prose, "why didja leave me, Luke?"

Strangely enough he did not stutter. Without the slightest difficulty he leaped that pitfall of the drunken, the letter L.

"Luke," repeated Racey Dawson, struck by a sudden thought. "What's this about Luke? You mean Luke Tweezy?"

The old man rubbed his shaving-brush a-down Racey's neck-muscles. "I mean Luke Tweezy," he said. "Lots o' folks don't like Luke. They say he's mean. But they ain't nothin' mean about Luke. He's frien' o' mine, Luke is."

"Mr. Dawson," said Molly Dale at Racey's elbow, "please go. I can get him into the house. You can do no good here."

"I can do lots o' good here," declared Racey, who felt sure that he was on the verge of a discovery. "Somebody is a-tryin' to jump yore ranch, an' if you'll lemme talk to him I can find out who it is."

"Who—how—" said Miss Dale stupidly, for, what with the fright and embarrassment engendered by her father's condition the true significance of Racey's remark was not immediately apparent.

"Yore ranch," repeated Racey sharply. "They're a-tryin' to steal it from you. You lemme talk to him, ma'am. Look out! Grab his bridle!"

Miss Dale seized the bridle of her father's horse in time to prevent a runaway. She was not aware that the horse's attempt to run away had been inspired by Racey surreptitiously and severely kicking it on the fetlock. This he had done that Miss Dale's thoughts might be temporarily diverted from her father. Anything to keep her from shooing him away as she so plainly wished to do.

Racey began to assist the now crumpling Mr. Dale toward the house.

"What's this about Luke Tweezy?" prodded Racey. "Did yuh see him today?"

"Shore I seen him today," burbled the drunken one. "He left me at McFluke's after buyin' me the bottle an' asked me to stay there till he got back. But I got tired waitin'. So I come along. I—*hic*—come along."

Limply the man's whole weight sagged down against Racey's supporting arm, and he began to snore.

"Shucks," muttered Racey.

Then stooping, he picked up the limp body in his arms and carried it to the house.

"He's asleep," he called to Miss Dale. "Where'll I put him?"

"I'll show you," she said with a break in her voice.

She hastily tied the now quiet pony to a young cottonwood growing at the corner of the house and preceded Racey into the kitchen.

"Here," she said, her eyes meeting his a fleeting instant as she threw open a door giving into an inner room. "On the bed."

She turned back the counterpane and Racey laid her snoring parent on the blanket. Expertly he pulled off the man's boots and stood them side by side against the wall.

"Hadda take 'em off now, or his feet would swell so after you'd never get 'em off," he said in justification of his conduct.

She held the door open for him to leave the room. She did not look at him, nor did she speak.

"I'm goin' now," he said, standing in the middle of the kitchen. "But I wish you wouldn't shut that door just yet."

"I—oh, can't you see you're not wanted here?" Her voice was shaking. The door was open but a crack. He could not see her.

"I know," he said gently. "But you don't understand how serious this business is. I had good reason for believin' that somebody is tryin' to steal yore ranch. From several things yore dad said I'm shorer than ever. If I could only talk to yuh a li'l' while."

At this she came forth. Her eyes were downcast. Her cheeks were red with shamed blood. She leaned against the table. One closed fist rested on the top of the table. The knuckles showed white. She was trembling a little.

"Where an' what is McFluke's?" he asked.

"Oh, that's where he got it!" she exclaimed bitterly.

"I guess. If you wouldn't mind tellin' me where McFluke's is, ma'am."

"It's a little saloon an' store on the Marysville road at the Lazy River ford."

"It's new since my time then."

"It's been in operation maybe a year and a half. What makes you think some one is trying to steal our ranch?"

"Lots o' things," he told her briskly. "But they ain't gonna do it if I can help it. Don't you fret. It will all come out right. Shore it will. Can't help it."

"But tell me how—what you know," she demanded.

"I haven't time now, unless yo're comin' with me to see Chuck."

"I can't—now."

"Then you ask Chuck later. I'll tell him all about it. You ask him. So long."

Racey hurried out to where he had left his horse. He swung into the saddle and spurred away down-stream.

CHAPTER V

McFLUKE'S

"THEY been after him to sell a long time," said Chuck Morgan, rolling him a cigaret as he and Racey Dawson jogged along toward McFluke's at the ford of the Lazy.

"Who?" asked Racey.

"I dunno. Can't find out. Luke Tweezy is the agent an' he won't give the party's name."

"Has Old Salt tried to buy him out?"

"Not as I know of. Why should he? He knows he won't sell to anybody."

"Have they been after you too?"

"Not yet. Dad Dale's the lad they want special. My ranch would be a good thing but it ain't noways necessary like Dale's is to anybody startin' a big brand. Lookit the way Dale's lays right across the valley between them two ridges like a cork in a bottle. A mile wide here, twenty mile away between Funeral Slue an' Cabin Hill she's a good thirty mile wide—one crackin' big triangle of the best grass in the territory. All free range, but without Dale's section an' his water-rights to begin with, what good is it?"

"Not much," conceded Racey.

"An' nobody would dast to start a brand between Funeral Slue an' Cabin Hill," pursued Chuck. "Free range or not, it as good as belongs to the Bar S."

"Old Salt used to run quite a bunch round Cabin Hill an' another north near the Slue."

"He does yet—one or two thousand head in all maybe. Oh, these fellers ain't foolish enough to crowd Old Salt that close. They know Dale's is their best chance."

Racey's eyes traveled from one ridge to the other.

"How come they allowed Dale to take up a six-forty?" he inquired.

"They didn't," was the answer. "The section is made up of four claims: his'n, Jane's, Molly's an' Mis' Dale's. But they're proved up now, an' made over to him all regular. That's how come."

"Ain't Silvertip Ransom an' Long Oscar got a claim some'ers over yonder on Dale's land?" inquired Racey, looking toward the northerly ridge.

"They had, but they got discouraged an' sold out to Dale the same time Slippery Wilson an' his wife traded in their claims on the other side of the ridge to Old Salt an' Tom Loudon. None of 'em's worth nothin' though."

Racey nodded. "Dale ever drink much?" was his next question.

"He used to before he come here. But he took the cure an' quit. Today's the first bust-up he's had since he hit this country."

"That's it then. Luke gave him the red-eye so's he'd be easy meat for the butcher. Does he ever gamble any?"

"Shore—before he came West. Jane done told me how back East in McPherson, Kansas, he used to go the limit forty ways—liquor, cards; the whole layout o' —— raisin'. But his habits rode him to a frazzle final an' he knuckled under to tooberclosis, an' they only saved his life by fetchin' him West. All of us thought he was cured for good."

"Now Luke Tweezy has started him off so's Nebraska—Peaches Austin, I mean, can get in his fine work. It's plain enough."

"Shore," assented Chuck Morgan. "Yonder's McFluke's," he added, nodding toward two gray-brown log and shake shacks and a stockaded corral roosting on the high ground beyond the belt of cottonwoods and willows marking the course of the Lazy. "Them's his stables and corral," went on Chuck. "The house, she's down near the river. Can't see her on account of the cottonwoods."

"An' they can't see us on account of the cottonwoods. So——"

"Unless he's at the corral."

"I'll take the chance, Chuck. You stay here; down that draw's a good place. I'll go on alone. McFluke don't know me. Maybe I can find out somethin', see. Bimeby you come along—half-hour maybe. You don't know me either. I'll get into conversation with yuh. You follow my lead. We'll pull McFluke in if we can. Between the two of us—well, anyhow we'll see what he says."

Chuck Morgan nodded, and turned his horse aside toward the draw.

Ten minutes later the water of the Lazy River was sluicing the dust from the legs and belly of Racey Dawson's horse. Racey spurred up the bank and rode toward the long low building that was McFluke's store and saloon.

THERE were no ponies standing at the hitching-rail in front of the place. For this Racey was devoutly thankful. If he could only catch McFluke by himself.

As Racey dismounted at the rail a man came to the open doorway of the house and looked at him. He was a heavy-set man, developed like a bloodhound, and his hard blue eyes were close-coupled. The reptilian forehead did not signify a superior mentality, even as the slack retreating chin denoted a minimum of courage. It was a most contradictory face. The features did not balance. Racey Dawson was not a student of physiognomy, but he recognized a weak chin when he saw it. If this man were indeed McFluke, then he, Racey Dawson, was in luck.

Without a word the man turned from the doorway. Racey heard him walking across the floor. And for so heavy a man his step was amazingly light. Racey went into the house. The room he entered was a large one. In front of a side wall tiered to the low ceiling with shelves bearing a sorry assortment of ranch-supplies, was the store counter. Across the back of the room ran the long bar. Behind the bar, flanking the door giving into another room, were two shelves heavily stocked with rows of bottles.

The man who had come to the door was behind the bar. His hands were resting on top of it, and he was staring fixedly and fishily at Racey Dawson. There was no welcome in his face. Nor was there any unfriendliness. It was simply exceedingly expressionless.

Racey draped himself against the bar.

"Liquor," said he.

Having absorbed a short one, he poured himself a second.

"Have one with me," he nodded to the man.

"All right." The man's tone was as expressionless as his face. "Here's ——" He filled and drank.

Racey looked about the room.

"Where's Old Man Dale?" he asked casually.

"He got away on me," replied the man. "He—Say!"—with sudden suspicion—"who are you?"

"Are you McFluke?" shot back Racey.

The man nodded slowly, suspicion continuing to brighten his hard blue eyes.

"Then what didja let him get away for?" persisted Racey. "Luke Tweezy said he left him here, an' he said he'd stay here. That was yore job—to see he stayed here."

"Who are—" persisted the suspicious McFluke.

"Ne'r mine who I am," rapped out Racey, who believed he had formed a correct estimate of McFluke. "I'm somebody who knows more about this deal than you do an' that's enough for you to know. Why didn't you hold Old Man Dale?"

"I—he got away on me," knuckled down McFluke. "I was in the kitchen, getting' me some coffee, an' when I come back he had dragged it."

"Luke Tweezy will be tickled to death with you," said Racey Dawson. "What do you s'pose he went to all that trouble for?"

"I couldn't help it, could I? I ain't got eyes in the back of my head so's I can see round corners an' through doors. How'd I know Old Man Dale was gonna slide off? When I left him he was all so happy with his bottle you'd 'a' thought he'd took root for life. Anyway Peaches Austin oughta come before the old man left. He was supposed to come, an' he didn't. If anythin' slips up account o' this it's gotta be blamed on Peaches."

"Yeah, I guess so. An' Peaches ain't been here yet?"

"Not yet, an' I wish to —— he was never comin'!"

The man's tone was so earnest that Racey looked at him, startled.

"Why not?" he asked coldly.

"Because I don't wanna get my head blowed off; that's why."

"Aw, maybe it won't come to that. Maybe Luke will win out."

"It ain't only Luke Tweezy who's gotta win out, an' you know it. An' they's an 'if' the size of Pike's Peak between us an' winnin' out. I tell yuh, I don't like it. It's too —— dangerous."

"Shore it's dangerous," assented Racey, slowly revolving his glass between his thumb and fingers and wondering how far he dared go with this McFluke person. "But a gent's gotta live."

"He don't have to get himself killed doin' it," snarled McFluke, swabbing down the bar. "Who's that a-comin'?"

He went to the doorway to see for himself who it was that rode so briskly on the Marysville trail.

"Peaches Austin!" he sneered. "He's only about three hours late."

It was now or never. Racey risked all on a single cast.

"What did the boss say when him an' Lanpher got here an' found old Dale gone?" he asked carelessly.

"He raised ——" replied McFluke. "But Lanpher wasn't with him. Yuh know old Dale hates Lanpher like poison. Well, I told Jack, like I tell you, that if anythin' slips up account o' this, Peaches Austin can take the blame."

Racey nodded indifferently and slouched sidewise so that he could watch the doorway without dislocating his neck. McFluke, his back turned, still stood in the doorway. Racey lowered a cautious hand and loosened his six-shooter in its holster. He wished that he had taken the precaution to tie it down. It was impossible to foresee what the next few minutes might bring forth. Certainly the coming of Peaches Austin was most inopportune.

Peaches Austin galloped up. He dismounted. He tied his horse. He greeted cheerily the glowering McFluke. The latter did not reply in kind.

"This is a fine time for you to get here," he growled. "A fi-ine time."

"Shut up, you fool!" cautioned Peaches in a low voice. "Ain't you got no better sense, with the old man——"

"Don't let the old man worry you," yapped McFluke. "The old man has done flitted. An' Jack's been here an' he's done flitted."

"Whose hoss is that?" demanded Peaches, evidently referring to Racey's mount.

"One of the boys," replied McFulke. "One o' Jack's friends. C'mon in."

ENTERED then Peaches Austin, a lithe, muscular person with pale eyes and a face the color of a dead fish's belly. He stared noncommitally at Racey Dawson. It was evident that Peaches Austin was taking no one on trust. He nodded briefly to Racey and strode to the bar. McFluke went behind the bar.

"Ain't I seen you in Farewell, stranger?" Peaches Austin asked shortly.

"You might have," returned Racey. "I'm mighty careless where I travel."

"Known Jack long?" Peaches was becoming nothing if not personal.

"Long enough," smiled Racey.

"Lookit here, who are you?"

"That's what's worryin' McFluke," dodged Racey, wishing that he could see just what it was McFluke was doing with his hands.

But McFluke was employing his hands in nothing more dangerous than the fetching of a bottle from some recess under and behind the bar. Now he laughed.

"He ain't tellin' all he knows," he said to Peaches Austin. "Don't be so —— susspiciony, Peaches. He's a friend o' Jack's I tell yuh. He knows all about the deal."

"That don't make him no friend of Jack's," declared Peaches stubbornly. I——"

At which juncture Peaches' flow of language was interrupted by the sudden entrance of Chuck Morgan. Chuck, after a sweeping glance round the room, headed straight for the bar.

"McFluke," said Chuck, halting a yard from the bar, "did you sell any red-eye to Old Man Dale today?"

"What's that to you?" demanded McFluke truculently.

"Why, this," replied Chuck, producing a six-shooter so swiftly that McFluke blinked. "You listen to me," he resumed harshly. "It don't matter whether you sold it to him or not. He got it here, an' that's the main thing. I'm telling you if he gets any more I'm gonna make you hard to find."

"Is that a threat or a promise?" inquired McFluke.

"Don't do that," Racey said suddenly, as his hand shot out and pinned fast the right wrist of Peaches Austin. "C'mon outside now, where we can talk. Right through the door. To yore left. Aw right, now they can't hear us. Lookit, they ain't no call for a gun-play; none whatever. This gent is only layin' down the law to Mac. An' here you gotta get serious right away. See how easy Mac takes it. He ain't doin' a thing, not a thing. Good as gold, Mac is. Can't you see how a killin' thisaway, an' a fellah like Morgan too, would maybe put a crimp in this place for good? Have some sense, man. We need McFluke's."

"He hadn't oughta drawed on Mac," said Peaches, his pale eyes, shifty as a cat's, darting incessantly between Racey and the doorway.

"He didn't shoot him. An' he ain't gonna. You lemme attend to this, will yuh? I'll get him away quiet an' peaceable if I can. But you keep out of it. Y'understand?"

Peaches Austin gnawed his lower lip. "I never did like Chuck Morgan," he grumbled. "It was a good chance."

"A good chance to get yoreself lynched. Shore, it was all that."

"Say, I'd like to know where you come in, stranger. Jack never said nothin' to me about any feller yore size."

"Jack is like me. He ain't tellin' all he knows. An' while we're talkin' about Jack, I'll tell you somethin'. An' that's to keep away from Farewell for three-four days."

"Why for?"

"So's to give Jack a chance to cool off. He's hotter than a wet wolf 'cause you didn't turn up here on time."

"I ain't afraid o' Jack."

"'Course you ain't. But yuh know how Jack is. Even if it don't come to a showdown, there'll be words passed. An' I don't wanna run any risk of you quittin' the outfit. Every man is needed. You be sensible an' stick here with McFluke three-four days like I say, an' after that c'mon in to Farewell. In the mean time I'll see Jack an' tell him how it happened you didn't get here on time. An' how did it happen anyway?"

Peaches Austin looked this way and that before replying.

"I shore don't like to tell how it happened," he said. "Sounds so babyish-like. But my hat blowed off over this side of Injun Ridge a ways an' when I leaned down to pick it up, my hoss started, my hand slipped, an' I went off on my head ker-blam. An' do yuh know, I'll bet I was three hours a-runnin' from —— to breakfast before I caught that hoss where he was feedin' in a narrow draw. I'm all tired out yet. They ain't no strength in my legs."

"I'll fix it up with Jack," Racey lied with a wonderfully straight face. "Don't you worry."

"I ain't worryin'," Peaches denied irritably. "I ain't afraid of Jack, I tell yuh."

"Shore," soothed Racey, who, having formed an estimate of Peaches, ranked him scarcely higher than McFluke and treated him accordingly. "Shore, I know you ain't. But alla same you need considerable of a coolin' off yoreself. Just you stay out here now an' watch me get Morgan away."

Racey nodded blithely to Peaches Austin, and turned to go into the house. He saw that Chuck Morgan had come outside, that he had brought McFluke with him, and was observing events with a cold and calculating eye.

"I tell yuh I couldn't help his gettin' the whisky," McFluke was whining. "It ain't my fault if somebody gives it to him, is it?"

"Of course not," chimed in Racey briskly. "Mac means all right. He didn't know there was any law against providin' old Dale with whisky."

"They is a law," insisted Chuck Morgan belligerently, his gun trained unswervingly on McFluke's broad stomach. "They is a law. I made it. An' it goes. Peaches," he added, raising his voice, "don't you slide round the house now. If you move so much as a yard from where yo're standin' I ventilate McFluke immediate."

"I wouldn't do that," said Racey mildly.

"I got my eye on you too," declared Chuck. "What I said to Peaches goes for you, an' don't forget it."

"I ain't likely to; not me. All I want you to do is go some'ers else peaceful. You ain't figurin' on livin' here, are yuh?"

Chuck uttered a short hard laugh. McFluke's back was toward Racey. Peaches Austin was behind him, thirty feet away. Racey's left eyelid drooped. His head moved almost imperceptibly toward his horse.

* * *

"I'M GOIN' now," said Chuck.

"I'll go with yuh just to see yuh on yore way sort of," said Racey.

"You was goin' with me anyway sort of," Chuck told him. "Yo're the only *man* round here so far's I can see, an' I ain't takin' any chances on you; not a chance. Yo're goin' down the trail a spell with me. Later you can come back. Keep yore hands where they are."

Quickly Chuck shoved McFluke to one side, rushed forward and possessed himself of Racey's gun. "Crawl yore hoss," he commanded.

Racey obeyed without a word. Chuck climbed into his own saddle without losing the magic of the drop and without losing sight for an instant of McFluke and Peaches Austin.

"Take the trail south," said Chuck Morgan, and backed his horse in a wide half-circle.

Racey did as he was ordered. Three minutes later he was joined by his friend. Until the trail took them down into a draw grown up in spruce Chuck's gun remained very much in evidence. Any unbiased spectator without a knowledge of the facts would have said that he was keeping a close watch on Racey Dawson.

Once out of sight of the house of McFluke, Chuck sheathed his six-shooter with a jerk and returned Racey's gun.

"You done fine at the last," Racey said admiringly, as he holstered his weapon. "But what did yuh jump McFluke for thataway at first? That come almighty near kickin' the kettle over, that play did."

"I know," said Chuck shamefacedly, "an' when I rode up to the shack I hadn't intended nothin' like that. But when I saw that slickery juniper McFluke standin' there behind the bar so fat an' sassy, it come over me all of a sudden what he'd done to the Dale family by lettin' old Dale have whisky, that I couldn't help myself. ——, I wanted to knock him down an' tromp his face as flat as a floor. It ain't as if McFluke ain't been told about old Dale's failin'. I warned him when he first came here last year not to let old Dale have red-eye on any account."

"I know," nodded Racey soberly, "but you gotta remember his givin' old Dale whisky ain't the particular cow we're after. There's more to it than that, a whole lot more. We gotta be a li'l careful, Chuck, an' go a li'l slow. If we go havin' a fraycas now they'll get suspicious an' go fussbudgettin' round like a houn'dog after quail."

"Just as if they won't suspicion somethin's up soon as Peaches Austin gets back to Farewell."

"Peaches Austin ain't goin' back to Farewell right way. I've fixed Peaches for a few days. An' a few days is all I need to find out what I wanna. An' even after Peaches does float in, will he know me after I've changed my shirt, dirtied my hat, an' got me a clean shave twice over?

"He ain't got no idea what I look like under the whiskers. He wasn't livin' in Farewell before I went north, so all he knows about me is my voice an' my hoss. It will be shore the worst kind of luck if I can't keep Peaches from hearin' one an' seein' the other until after I'm ready. You leave it to yore uncle, Chuck. He knows."

"He's a great man, my uncle," assented Chuck and stuck a derisive tongue in his cheek. "What did you find out from McFluke—anythin'?"

"Anythin'? Gimme a match an' I'll tell yuh."

CHAPTER VI

CHANGE OF PLAN

"IT'S A long way to Arizona," offered Racey Dawson casually, too casually.

Swing Tunstall's bristle-haired head jerked round. Swing bent two suspicious eyes upon his friend.

"You just find it out?" he queried.

"No, oh, no," denied Racey. "I been thinkin' about it some time."

"Thinkin'!" sneered Swing. "That's a new one—for you."

"Nev' mine," countered Racey. "It ain't catchin'—to you."

"Is that so?" yammered Swing, now over his head as far as repartee was concerned. "Is *that* so? What you gassin' about Arizona for thisaway? You gonna renig on the trip?"

"I'll bet there's plenty of good jobs we can find right here in Farewell," dodged Racey. "An' vicinity," he amended. "Yep, Swing, old-timer, I'll bet the Bar S or the Cross-in-a-box would hire us just too quick. Shore they would. It ain't every day they get a chance at a jo-darter of a buster like——"

"Like the——liar in four States, meanin' you," cut in Swing.

"Yo're right," admitted Racey promptly. "When I was speakin' of a jo-darter I meant you, so I was a liar. I admit it. I might 'a' knowed you wouldn't appreciate my kind words. Besides bein' several other things, yo're a ungrateful cuss. Gimme the makin's."

"Smoke yore own, you hunk of misery. You had four extra sacks in yore war-bags this mornin'."

"Had? So you been skirmishin' round my war-bags, have yuh? How many of them sacks did you rustle?"

"I left two."

"Two! Two! Say, I bought that tobacco myself for my own personal use, an' not for a lazy, loafin', cowfaced lump of slumgullion to glom an' smoke. Why don't you spend somethin' besides the evenin' now an' then? ——, you sit on your coin closer than a hen with one egg. I'll gamble that Robinson Crusoe spent more money in a week than you spend in four years. Two sacks of my smokin'! You got a gall like a hoss. There was my extra undershirt under them sacks. It's a wonder you didn't smouch that too."

"It didn't fit," replied Swing Tunstall, placidly constructing a cigaret. "Too big. Besides all the buttons was off, an' if they's anythin' I despise it's a undershirt without any buttons. Sort of wanderin' off the main trail though, ain't we, Racey? We was talkin' about Arizona, wasn't we?"

"We was not," Racey contradicted quickly. "We was talkin' about a job here in Fort Creek County. To —— with Arizona."

"To —— with Arizona, huh? Yo're serious? You mean it?"

"I'm serious as lead in yore inwards. 'Course I mean it. Ain't I been sayin' so plain as can be the last half-hour?"

"Yo're sayin' so is plain enough. An' so is the whyfor?"

"The whyfor?"

"Shore, the whyfor. Say, do you take me for a fool? Here you use up the best part of two days on a trip I could make in ten hours goin' slow an' eatin' regular. Who is she, cowboy, who is she?"

"What yuh talkin' about?"

"What am I talkin' about, huh? I'd ask that, I would. Yeah, I would so. Is she pretty?"

"Poor feller's got a hangover," Racey murmured in pity. "I kind o' thought it must be somethin' like that when he began to talk so funny. Now I'm shore of it. You tie a wet towel round yore head, Swing, an' take a good long pull of cold water. You'll feel better in the mornin'."

"So'll I feel better in the mornin' if you jiggers will close yore traps an' lemme sleep," growled a peevish voice in the next room on the Main Street side.

"As I live," said Racey in a tone of vast surprize, "there's somebody in the next room."

"Sounds like the owner of the Starlight," hazarded Swing Tunstall.

"It is the owner of the Starlight," corroborated the voice, "an' I wanna sleep, an' I wanna sleep now."

"We ain't got no objections," Racey told him. "She's a fine, free country. An' every gent is entitled to life, liberty an' the pursuit of happiness, three things no home should be without."

"Shut up, will yuh?" squalled the goaded proprietor of the Starlight Saloon. "If you wanna make a speech go out to the corral an' don't bother regular folks."

"Hear that, Swing?" grinned Racey, and twiddled his bare toes delightedly. "Gen'l'man says you gotta shut up. Says he's regular folks too. You be good boy now an' go by-by."

"Shut up!"

"Here, here, Swing!" cried Racey, struck by a brilliant idea. "What yuh doin' with that gun?"

"I—" began the bewildered Swing, who had not even thought of his gun but was peacefully sitting on his cot, pulling off his boots.

"Leave it alone!" Racey interrupted in a hearty bawl. "Don't yuh go holdin' it at the wall even in fun. It might go off. Yuh can't tell. Yo're so all-fired careless with a six-shooter, Swing. Like enough yo're aimin' right where the feller's bed is, too," he added craftily.

Ensued then sounds of rapid departure from the bed next door. A door flew open and slammed. One padded down the stairs in his socks, invoking his Maker as he went.

"An' that's the last of him," chuckled Racey.

"Oh, you needn't think I'm forgettin'," grumbled Swing Tunstall, sliding out of his trousers and folding them tidily beside his boots. "You soft-headed yap, have you gotta let a woman spoil everythin'?"

"Spoil everythin'?"

"You don't think I'm goin' alla way to Arizona by myself, nobody to talk to nor nothin', do yuh? Well, I ain't. You can stick a pin in that."

Racey immediately sprang up, seized his friend's limp hand and pumped it vigorously.

"Bless you for them words," he said. "I knowed you'd stick by me. I knowed I could depend on ol' Swing to do the right thing. Tomorrow you an' me will traipse out an' locate us a couple of jobs."

Swing doubled a leg, flattened one bare foot against Racey's chest, straightened the leg and deposited Racey upon his own proper cot with force and precision.

"Don't you come honey-fuglin' round me," warned Swing. "An' I didn't say nothin' about stickin' by you, neither. An' when it comes to the right thing you an' me don't think alike a-tall. I——"

"I wish you'd pull yore kicks a few," interrupted Racey, rubbing his chest. "You like to busted a rib."

"Not the way you landed," countered the unfeeling Swing. "Yo're tryin' to get off the trail again. Here you an' me plan her all out to go to——"

"You bet," burst in Racey enthusiastically. "We planned to go to either the Bar S or the Cross-in-a-box an' get that job. Shore we did. You got a memory like all outdoors, Swing. It plumb amazes me how clear an' straight you keep everythin' in that head of yores. Yep, it shore does."

Hereupon, in the most unconcerned manner, Racey Dawson began to blow smoke-rings toward the ceiling.

Swing Tunstall sank sulkily down upon an elbow. "Whatsa use?" said Swing Tunstall. "Whatsa use?"

It was then that some one knocked upon their chamber door.

"Come in," said Racey Dawson.

The door opened and Lanpher's comrade of the attractive smile and the ruthless profile walked into the room. He closed the door without noise, spread his legs and looked upon the two friends silently.

"I heard you talkin' through the wall," he said in a studied low tone, a tone that, heard through a partition, would have been but an indistinguishable murmur.

"Hearin' us talk through walls seems to be a habit in this hotel," commented Racey, tactfully following the other's lead in lowness of tone.

"I couldn't help hearin'," apologized the stranger who was vestless and bootless. Evidently he had been on the point of retiring when the spirit moved him to visit his fellow-guests. "I'd like to talk to yuh."

"Yo're welcome," said Racey, hospitably yanking his trousers from the only chair the room possessed. "Si' down."

The stranger sat. Racey Dawson, sitting on the bed, his knees on a level with his chin, clasped his hands round his bare ankles and accorded the stranger his closest attention. To the casual observer, however, Racey looked uncommonly dull and sleepy, even stupid. But not too stupid. Racey possessed too much native finesse to overdo it.

IT WAS apparent that the stranger did not recognize him, which was not surprizing. For at the Dale ranch Racey had been wearing all his clothes and a beard of weeks. Now he was clean-shaven and attired in nothing but a flannel shirt. True, the stranger must have heard him singing to Miss Dale. But a singing voice is far different from a speaking voice, and Racey had not uttered a single conversational word in the stranger's presence. Now he had occasion to bless this happy chance.

Swing Tunstall, slow to take a cue, and still suffering with the sulks, continued to lie quietly and smoke, his head supported on a bent arm. But he watched the stranger narrowly.

The stranger tilted back his chair, and levering with his toes, teetered to and fro in silence.

"I heard you say you were lookin' for a job in the mornin'," the stranger said suddenly to Racey.

"You heard right," nodded Racey.

"Are you dead set on workin' for the Bar S or the Cross-in-a-box?"

"I ain't dead set on workin' for anybody. Work ain't a habit with either of us, but so long as we got to work, the ranches with good cooks have the call, an' the Bar S an' Richie's outfit have special good cooks."

The stranger nodded and began to smooth down, hand over hand, his tousled hair. It was very thick hair, oily and coarse. When sufficiently smoothed it presented that shiny, slick appearance so much admired in the copper-toed, black-walnut era.

Not till each and every lock lay in perfect adjustment with its neighbor did the stranger speak.

"Cooks mean a whole lot," was his opening remark. "A good one can come mighty nigh holdin' a outfit together. Money ain't to be sneezed at neither. Good wages paid on the nail run the cook a close second. How would you boys like to work for me?"

The stranger, as he asked the question, fixed Racey with his black eyes. The puncher felt as if a steel drill were boring into his brain. But he returned the stare without appreciable effort. Racey Dawson was not of those that lower their eyes to any man.

"I take it," drawled Racey, "that yo're fixin' to install all them comforts of home you was just now talkin' about—a good cook an' better wages for the honest workin' man?"

"Naturally I am." The stranger's eyes shifted to Swing Tunstall's face.

"Yeah—naturally." Thus Racey Dawson.

The stranger's eyes returned quickly to Racey. There had been a barely perceptible pause between the two words uttered by Racey Dawson. Pauses signify a great deal at times. This might be one of those times and it might not. The stranger couldn't be sure. From that moment the stranger watched Racey Dawson even as the proverbial cat watches the mouse-hole.

Racey knew that the stranger was watching him. And he knew why. So he smiled with bland stupidity and nodded a foolish head.

"What wages?" he inquired.

"Fifty per," was the reply.

"Where?"

"Southeast of Dogville—the Rafter H ranch."

"The Rafter H, huh? I thought that was Haley's outfit." It was Swing Tunstall speaking.

"I expect to buy out Haley," explained the stranger smoothly. "My name's

Harpe, Jack Harpe. What may I call you gents? . . . Dawson an' Tunstall, eh? I——"

"Haley ain't much better than a nester," interrupted Racey. "He don't own more'n forty cows at one time. What you want with two punchers for a small bunch like that—an' at fifty per?"

"I know she ain't much of a ranch now," admitted Jack Harpe. "But everythin' has to have a beginnin'. I'm figurin' on a right smart growth for the Rafter H within the next year or two."

"Figurin' on opposition maybe?" probed Racey Dawson.

"You never can tell."

"You can if you go to cuttin' any of Bill Barbee's corners. Haley's little bunch never bothers Bill none, but a man-size outfit so close to the south thataway would shore give him somethin' to think about. Then there's the Anvil ranch east of the B bar B. They'll begin to scratch their heads, you bet. Hall, too, maybe, although he is a good ways to the east."

"She's all free range," said Jack Harpe. "I guess I got as good a right here as the next gent."

"Providin' you can make the next gent see yore side of the ease," suggested Racey.

"Most folks are willin' to listen to reason," stated Jack Harpe.

"I ain't so shore," doubted Racey. "You ain't looked at the whole of the layout yet. How about the 88 ranch?"

"The 88," repeated Jack Harpe in a tone of surprize. "What'll I have to do with the 88, I'd like to know?"

"I dunno," said Racey, his eyes more stupid than ever. "I was just a-wonderin'."

Jack Harpe laughed without a sound. It seemed to be a habit of his to laugh silently.

"You musta seen me with Lanpher, I guess. Well, Lanpher an' I are just friends, thassall. My cattle won't graze far enough south to overlap on the 88 anywheres."

"Nor the Bar S," suggested Racey.

"Nor the Bar S."

"That's sensible." Thus Racey, watching closely Jack Harpe from under lowered lids.

Did his last remark strike a glint from the other man's eyes? He thought it did. Certainly Jack Harpe's eyes had narrowed suddenly and slightly.

"Yeah," Jack Harpe said, "I ain't countin' on doin' no fussin' with either the 88 or the Bar S. Of course Bill Barbee an' the Anvil are different. Dunno how they'll take it. Dunno that I care—much."

"Which is why yo're payin' fifty per."

Jack Harpe nodded.

"Yep. Gotta be prepared for them fellers—Bill Barbee an' the Anvil outfit."

"Yo're right," assented Racey Dawson. "Mustn't let 'em catch yuh nappin'. You would look foolish then, wouldn't yuh?"

He broke off with a sounding laugh and slapped a silly leg.

"How about it, gents?" inquired Jack Harpe. "Are you ridin' for me or not?"

"You wantin' to know right now this minute?"

"I don't have to know right now, because I won't be ready for yuh to begin for two or three weeks, but knowin' would help my plans a few. I gotta figure things out ahead."

"Shore, shore. Let yuh know day after tomorrow or sooner, maybe. How's that?"

"Good enough. Remember yore wages start the day yuh say when even if you don't begin work for a month yet. All I'd ask is for you to stay round town where I can get hold of yuh easy. G'night."

With this the stranger slid from the chair, opened the door part way and oozed into the hallway. He closed the door without a sound. He regained his own room in equal silence. Racey did not hear the shutting of the other's door, but he heard the springs of the cot squeak under Jack Harpe's weight as he lay down.

Swing Tunstall framed a remark with his lips only. Racey Dawson shook his head. The partition was too thin and Jack Harpe's ears were too long and sharp for him to risk even the tiniest of whispers. With his hand he made the Indian sign for "tomorrow," stretched out his long legs, yawned—and fell almost instantly asleep.

TO BE CONTINUED

"BROWN BESS" *vs.* "OLD KAINTUCK"

by LEWIS APPLETON BARKER

AS LATE as 1689, when King William's War commenced, England was still using matchlock muskets in her armies. King William, familiar himself with war on the Continent, adopted, as the regulation British military arm, the flint musket in 1690. The name "Brown Bess" dates back to 1570, when Queen Elizabeth, whose soldiery were armed principally with long bows and cross-bows, had one regiment equipped with matchlock guns with browned barrels and fittings, which took their name from their donor. But although matchlocks, wheel-locks and snaphances in the shape of British Army muskets were known in their day by that name, after 1744 the title was applied only to the flintlock of that name.

It was easily recognizable from other muskets of the flint type by these differences: The barrel was fastened to the stock by pins, not bands, the arm was mounted with brass, and was marked by the British government.

The weapon was very unreliable, owing to its total inability to shoot accurately. This was due to the fact that the interior of the barrel, even after boring, was far from true. Also the bullet itself, wabbling loosely in the barrel and rolling along the bore as it was discharged, rarely went where it was desired to go.

In addition, the soldier was not taught to exercise any individual shooting. He merely held his gun in a horizontal position, pointed—not sighted—it, and fired. It was all volley shooting at not over one hundred yards.

* * *

THE American flintlock rifle, called "Kentucky," or in dialect "Kaintuck," had reached its full development about 1760, and was to a great extent responsible for the gaining of independence. Used by such men as Morgan, George Rogers Clark, Kenton, Boone, John Sevier and other of the early pioneers, the rifle of that day was nearly as accurate at short range as the best of modern weapons. It was long, slender and graceful, and did not weigh nearly as much as "Brown Bess."

The latter, too, had the great disadvantage of so fouling after being fired five or six times as to require a half-hour's labor to make it sufficiently clean to be fit to be again discharged. The American, beside rifling or grooving the inside of the barrel and having the bullet fit the same so that with adjusted sights the rifle would hit the bull's-eye at a measured distance, had learned to use a greased patch.

In the stock of the gun was a little box with a hinged cover. In this was kept a lot of circular pieces of greased linen or leather of a size, and cut with a die. After the powder was poured into the barrel it was held, butt on the ground, and one of these patches was laid on the muzzle; the ball was placed on it and pressed into the bore with the thumb. Then it was rammed home.

A blow with the ramrod flattened the ball a little so that it held its position. Then when the rifle was fired the ball expanded circumferentially and with its cover filled the grooves, preventing the escape of gas and gaining rotation. The patch, following the ball closely as it left the barrel, cleaned away the culch left by the passage of the lead, and, having accomplished its office, dropped to the earth, the ball speeding on to its mark. The patch also aided and facilitated loading, and made a gas-tight fit of the missile to the bore.

For the first time in history a weapon of precision came into use. And one also capable of repeating many times its first performance. And these weapons were almost entirely used by Americans. In the entire British Army in America during the Revolution there was but one company of riflemen, and that made up of Hessians, German gamekeepers.

In all the colonial wars the rifles of the colonists did real service. At poor Braddock's fatal defeat at the Monongahela, only about four hundred of the thirteen hundred English troops escaped, nor would they have but for the rifles of Washington's backwoodsmen.

At the battle on the Plains of Abraham, where the gallant Wolfe lost his life, the colonial riflemen were placed in front of his army. Well was his trust rewarded. Down went the French ranks as if plowed by cannon, marking the close of French power in the western world. But Great Britain let the lesson go unheeded, while America kept turning out rifles.

It was not alone American superior strategy that won that great struggle for liberty known as the Revolution. There were conjoining causes, but first among them was the influence and work of the American rifleman, and to him may be traced French intervention, since he won the battle of Saratoga, up to which time France had turned a deaf ear to our entreaties.

In the fighting from 1775 to 1781 England's loss in battle had been five to our three. When the news of Concord and Bunker Hill spread through the land, Virginia and other Western riflemen were sent for. A British soldier was shot at 250 yards with only half his head in sight; ten men and three officers were killed in one day, reconnoitering; a rifleman sighting some British on a scow half a mile distant finally potted the entire company.

To say nothing of Tim Murphy's feat at Saratoga, known to every American schoolboy. General Fraser was directing the British line, as he supposed out of shooting distance. General Morgan ordered Murphy to climb a tree and "get him." Fraser was three hundred yards distant. The first shot cut his bridle-rein, the second killed the man behind him, and the third gave him a mortal wound, thus forever cutting short that gallant officer's hope of retrieving the family estates, forfeited by his father, the notorious Simon Fraser, Lord Lovat.

And so on, until General Howe offered a reward for the capture alive of one of these ogres and his shooting-gear. When Howe finally got him the prisoner was sent to England to exhibit his marksmanship and give some idea to the British public of the difficulties their troops were encountering.

During the years of 1778 and 1779 riflemen were sought and organized everywhere. Regiment after regiment was formed, and to them may be given the credit for the success of the Southern and last campaign of the war.

Kentucky was rendered habitable by the same deadly weapon. It was the only effective agent against England's savage allies. George Rogers Clarke, at the head of only two or three hundred riflemen, in 1778-1779 captured the French-British posts of Kaskaskia, Cahokia, and Vincennes, and added a territory to the new nation of far greater extent than had been dreamed of.

The influence of the American rifle can not be overestimated, and while Brown Bess has added to the possessions of the British Empire and will ever find a soft spot in men's hearts as the upholder of British liberties, yet we must yield the palm in every way to the greatest single factor in our struggle for freedom, the early bulwark of American independence, "Old Kaintuck."

Southward

by Chester L. Saxby

Author of "El Capitán *Arrnie*," "*Not for a Thousand.*"

TO THOSE who go down to the sea in *dreams* a water-front is a Summer-sweet spot of wriggling, shiny shingle fashioned like a gorgeous horse-collar, quite as brilliantly varnished, quite as o'erlapped with a flowing main (if the spelling be not too closely scrutinized). Adjacent sand-hills billowing higher and higher toward green hills—or perhaps blue—are careless burial-ground for eloquent memorials of the sea: here a quaint, dilapidated dory, rotting in the spicy breeze carrying from those picturesque hillocks a faint aroma of sea-pinks; a rusted, broad-fluked anchor, thrusting upward indomitable strength, incontrovertible poesy.

Among those retired and modest green hills—or perhaps blue—nestles a village like no other village in the world, the product of endless cycles of self-sufficiency, mild-mannered in architecture and speech, whitewashed, garden-fringed, full of a flavor of philosophy. A hint of the South Sea—a ship-load of romance borne back by hardy whalers—graces every cottage interior in the shapes of huge shells, intricately patterned corals, a variety of sponges and other miscellany.

A white-brick light-house stands upon the farthest point of land; down its storm-beaten side a great seam goes—like a petrified lightning-flash; it possesses an odor of mustiness utterly dissimilar to that of other land structures. Indeed, it is not of the land; it is of the sea. The lacy-sparred ships riding in the cove know this and seem to nod to it from the restless bosom of the surf that is the voice men listen to beyond all other sounds. The frame for this picture is a wondrous gilding of sunlight, and the wall upon which it hangs has been papered by Providence a deep, benign blue.

To those who go down to the sea in *ships* a water-front presents little of this glamour. Sight, smell, sound—they are all of a different order. Poesy has been abandoned for practicability; the billowing sands are hidden by dingy warehouses, the shiny shingle by wharves, the green hills—or perhaps blue—by such a growth of stone and mortar that they have become pressed down to a common flatness; while the village, lost to its maidenly coyness, shows itself a bulging, strapping thing of rank maturity, unshapely, smut-frocked, big-featured—a great city.

The odors most prevalent suggest a reeking caldron of strange dumpings—tar and stale brews and too long-trusted fish and thick grease and wet clothing with sweating men inside them and animals and harness and iron. In the matter of sound the voice of the sea has been quite outdone and is no longer heard; instead there comes a coughing and a sputter of mechanical lungs, a clang and jangle of dropping or clashing metal, a rattle of steel-rimmed wheels, a discordance of hoarse human bawling, often vile-tongued, snorts and clatter and the groaning of timbers.

The light-house speaking the uncharted seas—one sees nothing of it. There are no uncharted seas, although ships and men still lose themselves in blind alleys of tossing waters. And the frame for this picture is of no settled hue at all, but dim and smudged and finger-marked by tentacles of smoke—just like the wall behind it.

Much of all this was summed up on the water-front of San Francisco for Arnie Sondheim to walk through on his errand from ship office to ship office. But he had been too long of it to notice, too long inured to these and grimmer sights, to these and more deadly smells, to these and harsher sounds, to wonder about them.

Fog stole in from the sea, so little seen, and drizzled miserably over everything, sliming the pavements, chilling the flesh, saturating garments; clouds of it, blocks of it, blocks of it, walls of it everywhere shut out the sun and tested human affection for salt water.

Arnie, issuing from a doorway, stood staring about in mild disgust and proceeded to affirm once more in strong language and a soft voice how utterly he detested all water and especially that with brine in it, and those who ruled the latter kind.

"They don't want me, huh? Well, I don't want them either. There's places ashore where a man can live like he's supposed to live."

His hand, hard in the palm as the scales of a fish, went down into his trousers pocket and came up gripping a bulky roll of yellow banknotes. His features relaxed as he contemplated it—four thousand dollars, unquestioned in value anywhere in the world.

The little man at his elbow—he stood no taller than Arnie's armpit—put a cheerful face upon the matter. He had remained at Arnie's elbow throughout. They had brought in the sinking *Snowbird* together; they had received their due of salvage together; the little man hoped they would take out a tight bark together, Arnie in the cabin as he should be, and he in the galley—quite as he should be, too. He preferred down in his heart that it be a whaler, for whaling was a man's job, just as cooking for whaling men was a man's job beyond all else in life. Arnie would make a wondrous whaling skipper, he knew, whether he had ever whaled before or not—which represented the highest tribute one could pay.

It amazed him thoroughly that Arnie was not snapped up at once by every owner and agent. Nevertheless he put a cheerful face upon the situation because he knew no other face to put upon it and because he read his Bible and once in a while swore a little to prove that God watched over men and sparrows. Even when Arnie said he was through with the sea, Yankee cheerfulness was in no wise impaired. They were sailing men together; they would always be sailing men together; it was a noble career.

"Doos beat all," he said, "how mighty sot-up a landlubber'll git. Cain't see ez any on 'em cu'd box a compass theyself. Nary a thing yuh couldn't do to a ship. Jes' chil's play to yuh, I sense it." Pride made the little cook beam.

Arnie shook his head and attempted no reply. He recognized, as the cook did not, just what stood between him and a master's berth. Notwithstanding that every owner murmured something anent qualifications, it was not the lack of qualifications that entered the matter. It was drink; drink meant unsteadiness.

Arnie scorned to tell them that in two months not a drop of liquor had he taken, just as they scorned to come out openly and tell him why they did not want him. He had a reputation; the consideration ended there. The misfortune lay in the fact that given any sort of basis for pride and development, the distasteful whisky substitute with its momentary exaltation, its fool witchery, would never have entered into consideration.

"I'll try one more, Japes," he relented, stuffing the money away. "But by —— I won't ship before the mast! Come on! Button up, man; your vest's wet."

"Gorry!" ejaculated the cook, and wrapped his skimpy jacket tight about his skimpy chest, enclosing his beloved flowered waistcoat in a jealous embrace.

They made in out of the dreary weather and stood before a railing behind which a pair of hard eyes gaged them all the while that Arnie talked.

"Here's four thousand dollars to buy in on any vessel you've got," Arnie told him, "and myself to sign as master of 'er—coastwise trading."

Near by at the same railing a swarthy-faced individual looked up. Prosperity exuded from him; likewise an air of being an ardent hunter after more.

"An' half-again on my account, sir," spoke up Japes.

With true Yankee shrewdness he added: "We be a mind tuh take a chance, how-be shippin's downright poor fer a spell. Set me down at cook, sir, an' all agreeable."

"Hm!" remarked the man behind the hard pair of eyes. "A good deal of money—out of a job, is it? Pearl-fishing?"

"Deep sea more like," was Arnie's wry answer. "Name: Arnie Sondheim."

"Brung in the *Snowbird*, abandoned at sea," the cook announced.

"Oh, yes—yes. You have a master's certificate, Mr. Sondheim?"

"Say the word, and I'll go get examined."

Despite him, an eagerness crept into his voice. He scarcely knew what it was; first and last he wanted no more of the sea; yet here he was growing excited.

"No question of passing, be sure of that."

His anticipation pulling him on, he continued: "South American ports—Valparaiso, Callao, San Carlos——"

Of course, San Carlos was the end and aim of it all; he admitted to himself it was to reach Lelona and to reach her in the right status—a captain, as she had desired him to be—that he bent his pride to these land-cruising men in office buildings and mentioned the four thousand dollars. By right they should be glad to take him for himself, and no questions asked.

The man behind the hard eyes was saying:

"I couldn't promise anything at this time. The big vessels hog the trade; we've had to lay up two wind-boats——"

Arnie left the cook replying to this. Japes was a Yankee and took no insult silently. As for Arnie—what did he care for the man's opinion? It was simply a question of knowing an end of all this drifting; and that meant Lelona, the Chilean maid, and that meant being a ship's master, for she would not take him otherwise. The sixth well-found, successful man of ship affairs had turned him down—and Arnie smiled at the thought that he knew more about the business than the man.

Well, he would head for Jake's place and down some of the hot, bitter stuff that made him as favored and fine a man as any. There were ways of getting to heaven besides loosing a skysail boom that has got jammed. The jangling music-box soon became a harp. A poor enough heaven he called it to sit and strum a harp; Arnie Sondheim took his keenest joy in genuine activity; activity such as must have killed many another man, or at least have produced heart-leakage, rupture, tuberculosis. But what heaven kept a man forever yearning for that which he could not understand—just as a pregnant woman yearns for an article of diet she has never tasted? And if one must enter this heaven through the portals of raw liquor—why then, one must.

BUT in the corridor he halted, waiting for Japes; and there a hand fell upon his shoulder. He squared about. The swarthy-faced man of prosperity stood nodding to him, dressed in the height of fashion, a huge diamond winking from his necktie.

"Well, Mr. Sondheim; well, I'm pleased to know you! My name's Zeesman—Gabriel Zeesman. Happened in on Culp very nicely, very nicely for you, Mr. Sondheim. Culp's not your kind; too conservative. Not the way with me. When I see a good man, I don't ask what his last job was. Face-value—that's the coin, my friend."

Arnie grinned in return, mumbled something and waited. The man possessed a radiant personality and spoke to him out of a great void in the tone of equality.

"Fact is," he declared, "I'm a ship-owner myself—in a small way. You appeal to me, my friend. There's a brig of mine anchored in the bay, ready to clear and no captain to take her out. These high-priced masters are too much for me. To be frank, my funds are limited. Fitting her out and provisioning her has drained me."

"It's no time for making fortunes on the trade," Arnie agreed sympathetically. "I'm willing to help out."

He pulled out the big roll of bills. A boyish exuberance flamed swiftly. Money meant nothing to him.

"If it's Valparaiso—San Carlos, I'm your man." The vision of Lelona grew strong. "If she's ready now——"

"Slowly, Sondheim; slowly! How about your papers?"

"They could examine me right off," suggested this enigmatical sailor who was so tired of the sea. "Wages wouldn't hinder any. Profits are small, I know."

"As to that, it's all a question of management," Zeesman beamed. "Leave that to me—not a bad boat, as boats go—a two-sticker—much better than she looks; stanch life-boats and the right time of the year——"

Arnie could not be sure whether it was Zeesman himself that winked or the diamond. He did not care.

Japes came out then. He wore a rather red face from the exertion of regaling Culp with a true example of Yankee independence. The situation was explained for his benefit. He exhibited no such eagerness as had Arnie, but he had the natural seaman's ease of adaptation. Wherever Arnie went, he went; only, in his case his money stayed with him—or rather, in the bank where he had put it.

They sallied out to Zeesman's office, a far from agreeable place on a far from agreeable street. The air of the room was out of keeping with Zeesman. There an arrangement was made—tentatively. Thence Arnie and Japes struck out for the examiners', and after that for a bookseller's—just to be on the safe side. The examination was scheduled for the next day.

Arnie bought three books on the subject of navigation and by the following morning had entirely digested them, even to the punctuation marks, which, to one who has had no schooling past the fifth grade, became the part of discretion. Precious little the volumes did for him: he had not observed ship-handling for seventeen years to no avail—and he knew his "Huntley" backward.

The examiners grumblingly undertook to set down this mild, blue-eyed fellow, gave him one after another the full category, scowled over his penmanship, stared hard at the astounding accuracy of his answers, gloomed at his unfamiliar but precise handling of sextant and chronometer—and found nothing to disqualify him.

It was usual for applicants appearing before them to be nervous and bothered and so unduly prone to error and confusion. Arnie showed no nervousness at all—whereby one might read his unassailable confidence in himself, which was not strictly self-confidence at all but a queer underrating of all human knowledge. Neither he nor anybody else had acquired sufficient learning to be worth recounting, was his view of things; hence that endless yearning that he knew no means of satisfying.

He was an idealist, and yet he knew no ideal by which to guide himself; hence the habit—when the yearning was strong within him—to drink burning liquor that somehow lifted him off the low plane of mortal intelligence. He was abnormal, but he did not know it. And his abnormality resulted only in making him appear a very low type of animal indeed.

The examiners made nothing of him and gave him a master's certificate because they could do nothing else. Then and there they determined to revise standards.

Outside he was met by Japes, who asked nothing about the examination, remarked it was a fair morning and he had been down having a look at the *Jessica*.

"A weazly bottom she is, an' none o' the likes o' your sort," whereto in a tone of emphasis he added, "sir."

His magpie eyes sparkled at this thought. But since Arnie appeared to take no notice, he grew owlishly earnest again.

"I had the smell of 'er—from the water, yuh mind—an' she's—she's a wee mite over-ripe."

"We'll wash 'er down and give 'er a coat," Arnie told him. "She'll get us to San Carlos, to the yellow and green buoy. We'd be seen there from the hotel."

Immediately he was lost in quite another picture than that of a ship.

Japes blinked, professionally shaken by this speech.

"But there's the bringin' of 'er back an' the printin' of 'er in the papers, an' yer name ez master—so's a better vessel 'll be wishful of a skipper."

"Aye, the bringing of 'er back, and her name—that 'd be *Sondheim*," mused Arnie; "that 'd be *Sondheim*. But you never cast eyes on 'er, Japes—no."

"Wasn't I jes' glimpsin' 'er?" puzzled Japes. "*Sondheim* ye mought name——"

"Come along! It's a busy day." Thus did Arnie cut him off.

And truly it was a busy day, notwithstanding that the ship was already loaded and the hatches battened down, as Japes' jabbering informed him, and the bill of goods signed. Zeesman had even made some start at collecting a crew, with the help of the mate—an unclassifiable person with a huge buckled nose swung a point or more to larboard, a wide, bony frame on which his sour-scented clothes hung straight and flapping, a pair of blear eyes and a voice that sang wearily through his nose whose curves encouraged a startling variety of sounds. The mate's name was Rose.

"I gadder some more men an' be wid you quick," he assured Arnie. "A cook you got; odders iss easy. You got luck, Mr. Zeesman." Wherewith he departed.

Arnie had scant time to consider what companionship he was acquiring, so briskly did Zeesman take him in hand and confront him with papers galore: papers in regard to the *Jessica's* clearance, papers establishing Arnie's proprietary interest in the vessel, papers—papers—papers. And as yet he had not so much as seen the ship.

But to the shrewd Yankee cook's dismay Arnie treated all this as essential inconsequence to be got over as expeditiously as possible. He was embarking for San Carlos as captain, and had it been necessary and feasible he would have sailed a plank as readily as a liner, just so his arrival as master of it before the white-walled San Carlos hotel was regularly attested.

Zeesman appeared in fine humor and several times clapped Arnie on the back.

"I can tell a man first off," he kept insisting. "You're the one for the job, Sondheim. I've put all I have in this voyage. Our interests are linked—and well covered; a pretty sum I paid the underwriters; every cent of our money *absolutely* protected."

He rubbed his hands, and now Arnie observed for certain that not the huge diamond alone but one of Zeesman's coal-black orbs winked solemnly.

"I'm obliged to you, sir, for the chance," Arnie replied frankly. Out went his cupped seaman's hand. "I'll bring 'er in if I have to tow 'er myself."

Zeesman quickly intruded:

"Yourself—yes, yourself—but nobody else." His tone became that of complaint. "We can't afford to pay salvage; remember that. Do what you can—within reason. We can't fight every misfortune. The insurance is——"

But Arnie understood little of the subject of insurance. Honesty looked out of his blue eyes as he said:

"It won't come to that. You can trust me."

"Oh, I trust you; I trust you." Once again that eye of Zeesman's winked. "The men first, Sondheim—and yourself. I'm a humane man. The ship is secondary."

All the way to the wharf and over the gently rumpled waters of the bay Japes meditated in profound silence over this conversation. But he said nothing to Arnie, and Arnie sat in the sternsheets of the little gig and grinned at the sunny world. Even when the *Jessica* came fairly into view from behind a huge steam vessel, the shrunken size of her, the pitiable elderliness of her, the lack of paint, the dejection of deckhouses and spars—these and other mute signs failed utterly to bother him. He was captain—Captain Sondheim—*El Capitán* Arrrnie.

The purring of that name in the Castilian softness of Lelona's tongue made music in his ears, music of the spheres such as no music-box could ever produce. Life meant something; there was no room any more for loneliness, for dismal survey of the aim of existence. Japes saw the rich flush on his face and was the gay-hearted lord of the galley once more. He broke forth into song:

"Now tail on, ye whalers, ye hard-fightin' sailors,
An' we'll sing us a chantey of Jo-nah——."

Arrived at the *Jessica's* side, he was up the main chains in a jiffy and into the grimy box of a galley where, his beloved vest wrapped in paper and tucked out of harm's way, the dust began to fly and the sweat to roll as he roared in all the might of his thin chest the song of the Bering Sea fishers.

By the time he had brought his domain to order and come forth to draw some water, Arnie had taken full stock of his new command, save for that deeply-stowed portion below hatches; had set those of the crew that had come aboard to slushing and housecleaning, and, having unfolded and perused the long list of the cargo—which thereafter he would never forget in any detail—was engaged in the most meticulous inspection of the ship's stores, of the extra canvas and spars in the loft, of testing and sorting, and waiting for the mate to bring the rest of the crew.

Japes watched him go by and marveled at the troubled air he wore. It was an uncommon thing for Arnie to be troubled; it was the assumption of absolute responsibility, the little cook thought, and thereupon that shrill voice bawled right sturdily the optimistic twenty-second stanza of "Jonah" so that Arnie might hear.

But responsibility alone could not have troubled Arnie; rather it would have lifted him, clear-browed, into a mood of unshackled ease. No, it was simply that the *Jessica* lacked her complement of many sorts, carried sails that were thin and rotted, must employ ropes bewhiskered by time, had sadly warped decks and bitts budding out of them that shook loosely when one kicked them—these and other matters.

He felt himself already facing difficulties that Zeesman should know about. And yet Zeesman had said there was no more money. His explanation that Arnie's four thousand dollars had gone into insurance and provisions and advances to the crew and an endless catalog of other things was quite understandable.

Rose came aboard bringing four more hands of four sizes and colors and degrees of ignorance. He had a large way, had Rose, and he laughed as if he were sneezing when Arnie called to his attention one need after another.

"Never you should fear, sir," the mate said. "Come a heavy vind, ve clew up an' get pushed free of charge. Dey hold; dey hold good. Dose boats—sure; dey is fine boats. Look! See 'em! How you like dat now? So good—sure!"

Arnie watched him with a hint of his old forecastle indifference at the intimation of this speech. He thought it nothing less than funny when this crude fellow suggested that he was afraid for himself. He laughed suddenly—and he was the old Arnie that officers found so difficult to comprehend. He showed the lists.

"I'd ought to have a look at the hold. Open up the hatches."

At this Rose began to use his hands to emphasize his objection. The hatches were battened down—it was a tough job—as mate he had done his work well.

It ended in Arnie's call for jib and topsails to be shaken out and the anchor catted. The response of the little vessel pleased him. In short order they were in movement and on the full swell of the mighty Pacific. Such a Summer breeze ruffled them along as might cool the brow of one who goes down to the sea in dreams. The course was set, the quartet of the starboard watch sent below, and the *Jessica* slipped through a sparkling atmosphere on her way south, talking to herself merrily, her smeary sails scornfully repudiating their age, Japes sweltering quite naturally again in his savory steam and howling the anthem of the huskies in mammoth content.

SOUTHWARD—southward—Arnie paced beside the windward rail and breathed the satisfaction of it all deep into his lungs. They called him "cap'n"; they answered him "Aye, sir!" and "So she be, sir!" As a sweet undertone in a majestic oratorio these sounds reached him.

Southward—that was the theme of the piece! He felt an intense desire to stand all day at the taffrail and cast the log. In a while the broad strip of land had entirely erased itself; in its place no angry clouds gathered; the barometer held steady; the waves slapped the vessel's side, open-palmed, as a horseman slaps the flank of his mount. *Southward*——

How wonderful a sensation anticipation was! Days of figuring out just what would happen, how he should land, where Lelona would be—days of getting familiar with his new position, growing into it, contrasting it with the hard days that had gone by! Seventeen years and more with nothing to show for them—and a voice that whispered how different it might be, and here he was! Whisky—bah!—the music-box in Jake's place—music ——

The mate recalled him to a practical outlook by singing out, "Eight bells!" The *Jessica* had no ship's bell; the helmsman monotonously chanted the half-hours, and the mate roared them after him. This termination of the watch he roared with especial vehemence straight at Arnie; therefore Arnie, not wishing to interfere with Rose's four hours of authority on deck, took the hint and went below.

He spent some time getting his bit of a cabin into shape, so dirty and vile it was. Arnie had smelt smells of every wretched kind most of his life; he thought this one by a slight margin the worst. But what was a smell? What was a bad dream? It was just a dream. He was in the midst of reality now.

At the foot of the companionway, near the table, he saw as he came out a cardboard box of fair size. It had not been there when he inspected the ship before; consequently he unknotted the strings and turned up a flap. The thing contained bottles short and thick, amber-hued, ruby, tawny with the liquor in them, a few almost black and all plainly marked. The mate had brought them, then, when he brought the last of the crew. A considerable outlay, he adjudged, and more than one man could conveniently down between San Francisco and San Carlos. He spoke of it to the mate later.

"Mr. Zeesman's good vishes," Rose bobbed. Again that sneezing sound. "Mr. Zeesman hear you like dat to drink. Vell—he do right; he good man; sure."

Arnie said mildly:

"Somebody told him a —— lie. We'll dole it out in tots to the crew—with water."

He gave the mate no chance to reply; he had been reflecting over something else.

"Kind of queer, Rose, the *Jessica* clearing for San Carlos. 'San Carlos,' I says to Zeesman.' I don't remember his saying anything to that, but San Carlos was the port on the paper. I never saw much shipping there, either."

The mate hastened to assure him that this was no coincidence. He said:

"All dem ports iss de same down dere. Want de same t'ings—all of 'em."

Arnie nodded, disinclined toward argument. It was of no matter, anyway. What did strike him as peculiar was coming on deck that night to find the mate working over the forecastle hatch cover to get it in place again and hammering away at the battens for all he was worth. Arnie went forward and asked what it meant.

"Vell, sir—" *bang, bang, bang*, and the hatch nearly sea-tight again—"Vell, sir—I vouldn't have voke you, only when I go lookin' fer de soundin' lead——"

A stupid-faced grinning masthand heard him and pointed and said:

"She's a-hangin' on the mast, sir, tuh dry. I never hear of a soundin'-lead as was——"

"Douse my lights! I'm a unfortunate man," wailed the mate. "There, now."

At once Arnie began to have doubts as to the man Zeesman had given him for mate; odd enough he had seemed at the first, and now—searching in the hold for the lead. A poor ship with a poor mate. No getting one's satisfactions lightly.

But these doubts rested easily while the weather continued fair and the wind strong and steady off the quarter. Nine knots, he reckoned the hourly speed, and even ten; old sails, groaning stays strained audibly but forgot none of their early pride.

Two days—three—four—and the most select conditions a sailor man knows: a gently running sea, an even wind in which the braces were hardly ever touched, a speckled sky and not too harsh a sun. Besides, Rose to all appearance understood his business, could chart the course and hold it, and kept the vessel tidy and trim. Arnie lived through the hours as he had been wont to live through the moments when the whisky had him—with an almost foolish smile on his face; for no such thing as this could last; he would soon be waking up in grim earnest.

Japes joyed in the return to his killing duties, also in the increasing tropical heat; he sweated and bellowed sea-songs with equal lustiness—until the fourth day. The watches in turn and all of a group in the dog-watches gathered before the bit of a galley to observe him and to hear him, cutting off the due of air, grinning delightedly as at the finest show they had ever been permitted to witness—until the fourth day. The very ship sang, too, in all her parts for sheer gladness of the adventure—until the fourth day.

* * *

ON THE fourth day at noon while Arnie aimed his sextant to make eight bells, a tiny film of smoke came out of a seam in the deck, curled upward and was gone.

Arnie blinked his eyes and addressed himself to his reading. Close beside the main hatch another bluish haze showed itself. The wind destroyed it.

"Eight bells!" Arnie roared, lowered the instrument and rubbed his eyes. Then with all his might he stared at the boards, frowned, shaded his gaze, started suddenly as the phenomenon was repeated, and went and brought the mate.

"Funny t'ing," muttered Rose. "Once I see de wapor look like dat."

Despite the man's obvious effort to appear unmoved, into the skin of his face crept a pastiness.

The crew were beginning to gape. Arnie sprang into action.

"Rip off the hatch cover!" he bawled. But Rose's steel grip clutched him.

"Don't do dat!" he jabbered. "Seal 'im up! Keep de air out!"

Arnie hesitated, and made his mistake. The mate's advice seemed sound. He called for tarpaulins, extra sails, and had them spread everywhere over the decks. With that all trace of the haze disappeared. Sentiently eager, prattling joyously, the *Jessica* ran on southward—southward——

The next morning the edges of the laid

canvas gave off a gray-blue mist. Arnie watched it as in a daze; from his countenance vanished the foolish boyish smile; in its place came a hardness, a calculation. Swiftly, without mental scratching, he computed his position, settled the port of San Francisco nearly a round thousand miles astern and ordered the hatch uncovered.

When it came off, it brought with it a cloud of dark smoke that rose into the air and did not thin but fetched after it more and more and more. The crew became articulate; the mate swore in a foreign tongue; Japes drew out of the galley, banging his shins and apologizing to himself—and for the first time went unnoticed.

Arnie had ripped off his jacket, flung away his cap; he was engaged in tying his handkerchief over his mouth and nose. He called for a rope and thrust the noose under his arms. He mouthed a word to Rose and dropped down into the hold. With his going a vast hush spread over the ship.

Minutes he remained below. Then a sharp tug came at the rope. They pulled him up, a coughing, limp-legged figure. When he could find his breath:

"The pumps!" he cried to them. "Hitch 'em up! Water—Give it to 'er!"

His streaming eyes stared all about; at the sea, at the sky. They danced—the sea and the sky—golden-visaged in a swath of blue and green; they mocked him. He dropped down weakly, but his voice possessed spirit, confidence.

"She's not in danger—we'll have it out—Call the watch, Mr. Rose. Four men to the pumps. Bend on skys'l booms, sti'nsail booms——"

And as the vessel's head yawed, "Hold 'er steady!"

"Steady it is, sir!" drifted from the wheel.

The watch tumbled out of the scuttle, gaped momentarily and were hustled into the rigging. The pumps began to clank. Upon the crew the effect was much the same as upon children. Astonishment, dismay clipped the wings of their mentality. Questioning was for undisturbed times; in this emergency they did not profess to think; robbed of thought, they depended utterly on the ship's master. Arnie recognized this, knew at once the fulness of his responsibility; nor did it frighten him.

A great calm settled down upon him, robed him in strength. He had no nerves that were not his absolutely to command. The ship was on fire and burning stoutly. These people were in his keeping, their lives, their hopes, their expectations. This ship was in his keeping, Zeesman's ship, Zeesman's all, Zeesman's trust; and Zeesman had been the one man to reach out a hand of understanding and friendship. There was himself; there was Lelona—waiting——

Clink-clank spoke the pumps. The hose squirmed like a serpent rousing from a long nap—a very long nap, indeed. Salt water began to spit out of its mouth and run down into the hatch. No sound stole upward from the belching depths. Aloft a cry rang out; bits of canvas took the breeze; the *Jessica* gained headway and raced the laughing, dancing waves southward—*southward!*

"Bring it up, lads! Bend your backs!" shouted Arnie. "Give me a hold, and I'll show you."

Elbow to elbow with them he thrust down and pulled up. The flow increased. A hissing told them how well they did. As quickly as one man let go the handle and reeled away another sprang to spell him. It must be back-breaking labor. Arnie gave room and came to the mate, stooping over the hatch.

"Oy, vould yuh see dat?" Rose howled at him. "Black—my, my! It's vurse vile I see it! Ve couldn't never do it! Ve're doomed men, Cap'n Sondheim!"

Arnie measured him wrathfully, his mild eyes seeing the quick-stealing fear in this person who, next to him, held in his hands the safety of so many, the preservation of so much. Then men could be frightened even by smoke!

"Shut up! Take your turn at the pumps!" He thrust him away sternly.

Clink-clank! Clink-clank!

A new voice of the *Jessica*, a grating, wheezing, tired voice! For four days it had been a happy, piping, ardent voice, and serene, auriferous peace in the tinseled light of heaven. Serene, auriferous peace to fool them while all the time this monster ate at the *Jessica's* vitals! And if one could turn his eyes, stop his nose, clog his ears, that same peace surrounded them now.

The sea had not risen; the sky had not darkened; the wind had not freshened; it was unbelievable. Arnie felt ready to doubt his sense, to put this strange happening down as a mad hallucination such as the sea sometimes provokes, a nightmare of no substance; presently he would wake from it.

Southward — and Lelona waiting there!

All that day the voice of the pumps cried out. Men came off to the galley and had the fuel of life thrust at them by the chirping spider of a cook who assured them it was a fine day for the worst business and he couldn't object. They fell to scowling at him when he talked so; from doing that, they fell to cursing him.

"Sho!" he remonstrated. "Such a catouse I never did meet up with. A mite o' fire—well now! The victuals 'll be better done fer it, lads— Sakes alive, thet 'ere door an' me we don't conjingle."

He rubbed the bruised spot on his cheek and smiled paternally.

"Ain't we sh'd know not a sparrow falleth——"

"Tuh —— 'ith sparruhs," he was roughly interrupted. "Grog, I says."

Late in the still night Arnie lay on his back on the deck, gasping and watching the stars showering blessings of peace, peace, peace. He had flung back for a needed rest from the terror of the pumps. Save only that rasping, horrid screech, stillness unutterable lay upon the bosom of the deep. Then out of that stillness quavered a thin, labored, broken sound:

"'Some fo'c'sles I know,' says Jonah, 'I 'low
Stunk wuss than the guts o' this critter.
But the set o' the gaff in this 'ere bloomin' craft
It don't make my stomick tuh fit 'er——'"

Japes—he knew by this—had surrendered his sleep to pump with the others. And to what end? With every retch of the hose a stream of salt-water rushed into the bowels of the vessel where with or without the aid of the fire the heart of the enterprise, the valuable cases of cargo, must in a short time be ruined. And that meant that Zeesman must be ruined—San Carlos lay as far out of reach now as a dream. And this dream of his that— Port lights of —— What right had a fellow like him to be dreaming? He was here to safeguard Zeesman's ship and Zeesman's cargo. He struggled up, aching—aching. With Japes toiling and singing that way——

He fell to upon the pump-handle, having pushed some one blindly from that sweat-smeared instrument of agony. It was not Japes, for Japes grinned cheerfully right next his cheek and abandoned "Jonah" to mumble for his private ear:

"Thet 'ere mate 'll bear a sight o' watchin', I cal'late. Keeps too nigh the boats—drinks outlandish. Dunno ez he's tuh be trusted a-tall."

The mite of a fellow, refusing to give up, collapsed in a while and had to be thrust aside as if he were a sack of meal. Arnie pumped through two shifts and then could stand up no longer. And the stars paled, and the day dawned about them.

The *Jessica* had not her true buoyancy now; low she rode in the water, all too sluggish to act right even in this light sea. Yet, gorged with brine though she was, the fire had not been conquered; smoke curled out of her continually. The worried grumbling of the men, too, demanded some heartening change. Therefore, Arnie ordered a reversal of the activity, and a deal of the water that had been pumped in was pumped out again.

By this time another day had dragged past. The volume of smoke, neither more nor less, issued forth every minute. Rose trod the deck like a captive beast, muttered to himself and at length came out plainly for abandonment.

"Ain't she covered, hull an' cargo?" he reasoned. "Is it ve risk our life?"

"Maybe," Arnie answered him laconically, whereat Rose started. "Go batten down and tar the seams. Make 'er airtight." A light that Rose had not yet learned to know gleamed in Arnie's eyes. "We're sailing this vessel south, you and me."

Another night amid such hushed, startling beauty as the tropics know—unsavory incense wafted skyward—eight knots—nine knots—and the tarred deck-boards grew warm to the touch; the gray-blue haze kept them gaunt company.

Night and morning—noon and night. The weather showed no sign of coming on foul; its uninterrupted peacefulness began to be uncanny; the sunlight danced upon the skipping waves; the easy swell breathed regularly; the parting foam tittered at the ship's bows; the slapping counter sounded a satisfied chuckle.

It was not soothing to the nerves, this frivolous merry-making of a gambling ocean. It was anything but that. It got under the skin and back of the eyes; it worked evilly upon the most hardened and unimaginative of the ship's crew; Arnie it victimized among the first. He thought the elements laughed at him, knowing better than he what was going on deep down in the vessel's bowels.

He had known the sea to laugh and sing and beckon and wait until its patience was rewarded.

The days were hot, hot; the decks were hotter. He watched the masts, fascinated, expecting confidently that they would suddenly lean over, burned through at the butt, and bury them all in a hissing caldron.

If only he had feared, as these others feared! The mate became a fidgetting automaton striding forward and aft, his feet sticking to the warm tar and smacking as he went. It was from him that the crew took their cue and let their doubts smolder to terror.

For Arnie there was but anger at the destiny he could not solve, impotent hunger searching his spiritual vitals, with the means of satisfying his want growing every day more remote. The clamorous, perfidious voice of the rigging soughed in a dulcet tone:

"Mio Arrrnie—Capitán Arrrnie—I loook fair you' sheep——"

Maddened, he stared at the smoke, and when he could no longer stand it thus, he tore off the forecastle hatch cover, bawled for a rope and charged this buried enemy once again. When they had dragged him up and doused him with buckets of cold water, they did not understand the extraordinary look in his red-ringed eyes. Neither did he understand; a trembling had seized him; he gaped down into that vomiting hole.

"Boat-hooks! Rope and tackle! Get those cases up!" he astonished them.

They made a wide berth for him, beginning to fear his mind touched. They rigged a sort of shears, nevertheless, and grappled for a hold. The mate came and thrust out his under lip and threshed his arms and cursed them and told them to belay. He was watery-eyed with drink, dangerous in his swinging arms. He swung at them when they persisted in obeying Arnie. And, drunk or not, he was cunning.

"Vhat for?" he bellowed, lean, vicious. "Vhat for? Vould you stir it up?"

They paused then, undecided. Arnie ordered him aside, and he shook his head. But one course remained, and Arnie lost not a moment in taking it. He leaped forward; the mate crouched. In a twinkling the contest for mastery was on.

The man, Rose, could fight. His lunges were terrible, his reach appalling. From out his buckled, larboard-swung nose his breath whistled frightfully; a throaty language he garbled as he fought. For ten minutes the gutting fire was almost forgotten, almost of no account. Arnie bled at jaw and temple and kept advancing; one cheek stood out puffed and growing swiftly blackish blue. In the end it was this unceasing advance that told. Rose went down, sought to scramble backward as he got up, flung out a hand for support, caught Arnie's fist under his chin and wallowed in the scuppers.

"I snum!" said Japes. "Thet's whaler fightin' in proper shape," and went to see the first case swung up on to the deck.

The hoisting hands seemed not to exert themselves at all. Another followed—and another. Arnie stood watching out of his one undamaged eye while they were opened. One held huge pieces of bent and rusted iron; one contained bits of plaster and broken lathing; out of the third poured a stream of yellow sand. The crew easily absorbed the completeness of the hoax and jabbered and laughed and hauled up more. Arnie was silent; gray as chalk grew his visage; still mute, he turned about and stared at the sea. Comprehension made him sick; the sweat started out on him. For a long time he stood motionless except for a strange trembling in his legs and arms. The little Yankee cook stole to him presently.

* * *

"THERE be a ship on the sta'board bow," he said in his patient, sympathetic fashion. "Want I should signal 'er?" Of them all he remained unaffected.

"No," said Arnie. Hard as flint rang his voice. "Clap on the hatch!" he commanded.

They commenced a rumbling protest. He stood over them until the passing ship vanished still hull-down.

"Pumps," he cried.

Fingers of flame shot up in full sight through the rakishly deposited hatch cover.

"Off with it! Pump for your lives! Turn to or you're dead men!"

A wild figure he was then. At bay before the world he stood. Zeesman had done this —Zeesman had betrayed him—and he was tired—tired—tired in the attempt to save Zeesman's cargo! Zeesman and Rose! What a fool he had been! But not such a fool as Zeesman had hoped. He would take the ship in—aye, if only three sticks of her held together! He would take her in, burning, in flames, every board crackling under him! He was captain—*El Capitán Arrrnie.*

His money was lost—every cent. He would see that it was lost; the *Jessica* would make port, and the little parchment-faced official of San Carlos with the greasy hair would come out at his signal and witness the truth and send back word—aye, he saw it now; another man had been smarter than he; but that was nothing, for he had been a fool. But fool or not, it did not occur to him to be a knave——

Fingers and tongue of flame where before had been leisurely drifting smoke—the tar bubbling and defiling the air—ignorant, cowed men crowding back—back—the searing, stupefying blow of his discovery passed slowly, was beaten down and conquered, just as it had beaten down and conquered the crying exhaustion of the last three days. In among them he strode, grinning in his bitterness of spirit.

"We've found it now, mates!" That was his word to them. "For'ard, the whole —— of it for'ard of the bulkhead! Pump! What are yuh 'fraid of? Strike up a tune, Joe—that's the jack! Right under your fists! Hark to it hiss, will you?"

He set the fashion by stripping to the waist. A crew were no better than their captain, he had always maintained. And the fighting desire gripped him now as it invariably did when the odds became too great to measure. Hitherto he had fought the elements alone; against him in this hour ranged the most terrible of all elements and human cunning—terrific odds!

And the stakes was *life;* not life as the cowering crew saw it; not the grinding out of the days. Lelona! He was bidding for her at four thousand dollars. He minded not a bit paying such a price; his bitternesss came of quite another matter. Arnie's idealism had received a jolt; cause enough for bitterness. It rankled in his heart and whipped him along—but there was Lelona! Grimly he pitted his resources, physical and mental, against that devouring flame. With the ship under him, Lelona was his; without it, the old story.

The little handful of men caught and reflected the intensity of his purpose. Fear-stricken they were and, for a time, easy marionettes. Naked arms and backs glistened and ran; the sound of panting vied with the hissing and the roaring in the hold.

Japes, who scorned to announce how well he had foreseen this disaster, scurried from galley to pumps and dragged himself, too weary to sing, back to the galley again; it was his doing after all that these shaken men kept to their stern, unequal task. Arnie felt the little man's nobleness like a magnetic, invigorating handshake.

And the night that Rose deserted, making away in the starboard boat while the crew strained at their labor and watched, Arnie could never have held them. But this bobbing homunculous with the emaciated face gripped the pump-handle and panted of the whaler's grit and of husky arms that saw it through, and soon they were bawling:

"Who guv' us the art o' the bold whaler's heart?
W'y, Jonah—ol' son-of-a-sea-cook——"

But after that night Arnie knew he could not trust them, with the mate's astounding example glaringly vivid in their minds. He hardly dared close his eyes for fear they had snatched the moment to steal the port boat—for the fire did not die as he had promised it would; it leaped up higher and higher; it licked at the mast and set it blazing; it bounded incredibly and snipped stays in two.

The worst sight was the conflagration of the staysail in a terrible roar.

Fighting fatigue became a grimmer enterprise than fighting the fire. And when Arnie would take a turn below to work out his reckonings, there before him stood what was left of Zeesman's shrewdly conceived gift—the red and amber and tawny bottles. He found himself reaching for them sometimes, to take his tot of grog along with the men who could not have continued without stimulant. To keep awake—to keep awake!

Came a time when in his anguish the hot tears fell; when that was over, he carried the bottles on deck and mumbled through his dry, caked lips that they were prizes to be worked for—the best man on the pumps—A heart-tearing relief shook him then. He peered, half-blinded with grime and smoke, at his wretched hands and arms and heard the drumming top-hamper coo, "Nex' tam' when you come——"

And at length, when the burden of water in the hold dragged down the vessel's head and she would not steer, and the laughing sea seemed very sure it had won, and the forward deck lay charred and ready to crumble, the fire began to lose way, to show more and more smoke, and blistered feet could stand with less pain the feel of the boards. Two days more, and the reek of salt ashes turning cold came stronger than the nauseating tar scent. Yawing, plunging, rolling, the *Jessica* stumbled to port.

IT SEEMED to Arnie he had never looked upon so wondrous a sight before as this white and green hillside above the roadstead of San Carlos Harbor. The crew gloomed from the rail like blackbirds on a fence surveying a harvested field. What could it mean to them? But Arnie flung away his crying need of sleep, discarded the last remnant of bitterness toward Zeesman and fumbled blunderingly at his jacket buttons. His voice that called for the boat to be lowered he did not recognize. The foolish boyish smile lit his haggard face. He had forgotten how to be calm.

Ashore on the disreputable street of the town he found the port official and sent him out to the ship. His duty was done; his pulses thumped as he made up the ascent to the broad-rambling hotel. The purple bougainvillea lifted its bloom for him to see. Over gnarled tree-trunks streamed the love-vine.

In at the kitchen door he looked, a bit tremulously. Lelona was not of those he saw, although they fetched him snapping glances and seemed to recall him. He went around to the front and into the cool, spacious lobby. He started, so suddenly did she appear in the center of his gaze. His cheeks burned all in an instant. Behind the desk she sat, her hands to her hair, a solitary, stirring picture.

He went toward her, the old-time grin lighting his face, the dare-devil Arnie endeavoring to show through the hard-used eyes, the smoke-chapped mouth. She perceived him advancing and bent an appraising gaze upon him. Her dusky, impelling eyes recognized him; her eyelids went up. She nodded, smiling faintly.

"A long time, Lelona," he said. "Got tired of looking for me, maybe. I made it, though. You knew I would, eh? Captain Sondheim of the ship *Jessica*."

"So?" she answered politely. His grin grew less assured. "Ah, *diablo*—how you look! Ugh! You haf faunee smell."

She wrinkled her nose and laughed in the music of a bell. She said more, while he stood mute and bewildered by the manners she had acquired, the impersonal coolness of her voice:

"I rrremembair now—you' nam' eet—eet ees—Arrrnie——"

She seemed proud of her ability to recall him.

He scarcely knew what to say; he seemed bereft of words, dazed. He blurted: "Come outside, Lelona, and see my ship. No kidding, Lelona; I'm captain."

She went with him, rather reluctantly, as if ships were a very common sight—as, indeed, they were, and the sailors from them, and captains, too. He waited for her to speak when he had pointed out the *Jessica* lying visible below them. But she did not speak at first; she laughed—and the laugh was new to his ears; it jarred his sensibilities, brought his face flaming.

"You' sheep?" she exclaimed then. "Ah, no; not a sheep, a—w'at you say—a *luggair*."

And she laughed again. He laughed with her as best he could. His heart felt contracted. He began to know how tired—tired he was.

Still, he conquered the tiredness, wrestled with it and won. He seized her hand and patted it. He would have kissed her then and there, but she modestly avoided him, and he understood how womanly she had grown.

They talked for a while, she so much more the lady than he could comprehend. But he perceived with a fair mind that she was right; that there were captains and captains, depending upon their ships. Had he not himself had doubts of Zeesman's diminutive, antiquated craft? Yet somehow he felt crushed and vaguely ashamed. She had expected more of him than he had accomplished, and where on all the coast could he find the vessel that she and he might glory in?

Stunned by this latest whim of Fate, he wandered out on to the hillside where the deep, gloomy shade of the shaddock bent above him, dripping the heavy, languorous scent of the tropics. Somewhere in a remote dell he dropped down and tried to think. There, like a child that has played himself out, he fell asleep.

When he woke, the day was almost spent. Picking up his cap, he trudged back to the shore. They saw him and sent a boat. Japes welcomed him on deck like a jack-in-the-box. His thin face was one huge weary beam of pride.

"She's yers!" he cried. "Zeesman ain't

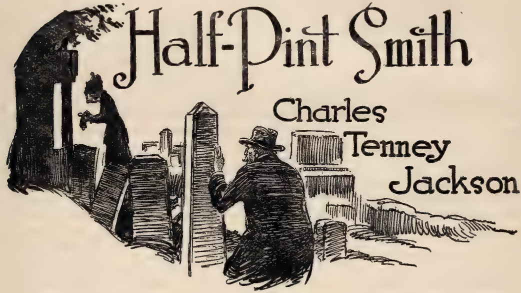
tuh be found. He's skipped out. She's yers fer four thousan'!"

The little cook was near to splitting with pride. His eyes dwelt on Arnie adoringly.

"Cap'n an' owner o' the ship—what say?"

"I said," Arnie repeated, taking in expressionlessly the subject of this gleeful announcement, "I said, not a ship, Japes—a *lugger.*"

Japes blinked, monkey fashion. He by no means grasped the significance of this detail. But then, Japes was not one who went down to the sea in dreams.



Half-Pint Smith

Charles Tenney Jackson

Author of "High Trail and Home Trail," "What the Old Horse Died Of," etc.

"BUT we buried somebody!" gasped Mollie. "I went to the funeral myself. If it wasn't Archie, then who was it?"

"Smith," responded Colonel T. Sambola Tunk, imperturbably. "A person named Henry Perkins Smith, I have discovered, reposes in the family vault where the Tunks, seh, of six generations sleep in peace."

"Oh, Lawdy!" murmured Captain Archibald, stretching out his legs luxuriously to the sunshine. "'Smith can have it, cunnel! With all due respect to the family traditions and all, don't save any hole up there for me! Mollie and I—after she got over the fright of having me walk in the house alive and kickin'—went up and inspected the last resting-place of the Tunks, and leave it to me if I ever start any family buryin'-vault I want a few jazz accompaniments. Only cheerful thing we saw were two little chameleons doin' a shimmy right on top the stone slab where you put this—er—Smith."

"They seemed just glad that it wasn't Archie," said Mollie with a glance at the tall cousin. "Racing around, intoxicated with joy."

"Ma'am?" inquired Colonel Tunk. "Oh, yes—lizards! Nobody minds 'em up there."

"Say," broke in Captain Archibald suddenly. "When you shipped this Smith person home from the Baltimore hospital and pulled off this bang-up funeral, thinking it was me, what did the preacher say in his sermon, anyhow?"

"It was, seh, a most worthy and beautiful tribute to you. He alluded to you, seh, as a bright and shinin' example of virtue and——"

"Didn't allude to your last year in college," giggled Mollie, "or the time you and Bill Calloway——"

"Soft pedal—soft pedal, Mollie," protested the captain. "I reckon I should have stayed in Armenia with the relief commission, or been buried at home with all these here beautiful tributes, instead of turnin' up for this unholy resurrection. It was Bill Calloway who cabled home in the first place that I had passed on, but I cabled a denial."

"We never got it!" cried Mollie. "Did we, colonel?"

"Never, seh," responded Colonel Tunk, detachedly; "sut'iny not."

"It's been a dreadful year for funerals in the family," continued Mollie. "First Granduncle Eli Tunk passed away at Hot Springs and the colonel had to go and arrange for bringin' him back. Then Cousin Murray died 'way out in Oregon and Colonel Tunk had his remains shipped all the way home. Then he heard you had been invalided back from Armenia and died in Baltimore and he gave you the most touching burial ever held in Mississippi City——"

"Smith," corrected Captain Archie solemnly and he picked up a four-dollar fiddle which Uncle Jasper had left on the steps and sawed out a doleful dirge.

"Ain't I some ghost, though? Wait 'till I breeze around town and see these folks that wept at the touchin' tribute. But Smith—what'll all the old grannies say about Smith?"

"I, seh," answered Colonel Tunk grandly, "have already anticipated that. I thought it best to make the explanations. I went to Editor Caswell of the *Bugle* and furnished him a brief summary of the—er—facts. As to Smith, I am already trying to trace the mistake of the Baltimore hospital people through Gove'ment channels."

"They mix up some guys something awful. Was Smith in the service?"

"A civilian employe on war work, seh."

"Get any trace of his folks?"

"Not yet, seh." Colonel Tunk waved his hand again with grandeur to indicate that he alone was entirely equal to the affair and that the word of a Tunk sufficed against a world of meddlers.

"All right," murmured the captain. "I ain't carin' so long as it isn't me. Gosh, no!"

And he proceeded to saw off on the fiddle and sing something that old Mandy in the kitchen recognized with reassuring delight as of old plantation days.

Snakes in his whisky, frawgs in his beer—
The old man died with a rag in his ear;
The rag fell out an' the breeze blew in,
An' the old man took to drink agin!

Mollie shook out her skirts and departed vigorously.

"Well, you can drive around to the Coleman's and pick me up, Archie," she called. "I'm just crazy to see what people say about it. You never did turn up in this community since your freshman days without raisin' some kind of rumpus, but this is the limit, after all that hero stuff. You ought to have seen the floral anchor that the Coleman girls sent you!"

"Anchor nothin'," retorted Archie; "why didn't they make it a corkscrew? I never could stand sea travel—sick as a pup all the way from Bordeaux."

And when Miss Mollie had gone Archie continued to sit on the step, gaze up the hill at the ancient burying-vault of the Tunk family, and draw most awful yowls and groans out of the four-dollar fiddle.

Colonel Tunk looked at his nephew cryptically. Archie went on with his fiddling. As far as Captain Archibald Tunk, recently of the Armenian Relief Commission, was concerned the incident was closed. He ought to be satisfied. Never, alive and fiddling, could Archie hope to win the encomiums that were lavished on him supposedly sealed up fine and tight in a lead casket; and as for Smith, an ordinary person like Smith could never aspire to enter the first families of Mississippi City, Mississippi, save as he had done, feet first *via* the Tunk mausoleum.

"Mollie's going to get the *Bugle* account of my buryin," mused Archie. "She says now I got to live up to what Reverend T. A. Bascom said about me in his sermon."

"He was eloquent, seh, over your remains——"

"Ree-mains? Go easy on this ree-mains stuff! Any time, cunnel, I ain't able to turn up and lug along my own ree-mains why I'll go up the hill and tell Smith to move over and quit pullin' the kivers. And what you goin' to do about Henry Perkins Smith? Suppose they have you pinched for kidnappin'?"

"Who, seh?"

"The Smith family."

"The world, seh, is full of Smiths. That is why, seh, I chose—" Colonel Tunk checked himself slowly and pulled at his white mustache. "Well, I suppose, Archibald, seh—I should make a little disclosure."

"Hey?"

Archibald ceased fiddling and sat up. Colonel T. Sambola Tunk rarely made disclosures. What a Tunk of Mississippi City, Mississippi, deigned to impart to the world never came as a confidence but as a fiat.

"I feel, seh, that the mystery of Henry Perkins Smith can never be fully cleared up. Already it seems enmeshed in Gove'-mental red tape by certain officious officials at Washington, seh; and it is beneath the dignity of a Tunk, seh, to enter into controversy over such an unfortunate matter."

"Yes, but there are a million Smiths in the United States, and suppose somebody turns up and claims Henry Perkins and——"

Colonel Tunk cleared his throat and straightened his string tie. One might say that gobs, oodles of disaster were yanked out of the abyss into which he had consigned Smith by this young man and dumped down upon the serene path which a Tunk should travel.

"I might say, Archibald, in passin', to relieve your mind, that nobody ever will claim this H. P. Smith; and as I state in my communication to the *Bugle*, the Tunks will extend to this po' unfortunate, unclaimed stranger the utmost hospitality that the family buryin'-vault affords. The Tunks——"

"Oh, my Aunt Jerusha!" murmured Archie. "Nobody gives a whoop! The point is that this poor devil—and anyhow, how do you know that no one'll ever claim his ree-mains?"

"Because, seh—by January first there won't be any."

"Be any? What are you drivin' at, kunnel?"

"Smith, seh, is a myth."

"What?"

"Smith, seh, is a subterfuge I confess I invented. Picture, seh, a mind perturbed and desperate, a soul eaten out with sorreh and despair, confronted, when you came back suddenly, with the necessity of deceit."

"Great guns, kunnel!" Archie arose suddenly, laying down the four dollar fiddle to gaze at his uncle as at one demented. "What do you mean? No Smith? Who the mischief did you bury then, seein' it wasn't me?"

"You, seh, also were a—a pretext. You, seh, seemed perfectly safe and secure, bein' as the report had come of your demise months ago, and I merely had to make a sorrehful pilgrimage No'th to bring back your—remains. You, seh, invalided home and passin' away in Baltimore, when as a matter of fact you had returned to Armenia or Babylon or somewhere, without communicating with us, seh."

"Blessed if I knew they still thought I was dead! I was ordered back abroad on short notice and Mollie never got my wire."

"Yes, seh, you seemed perfectly safe and reliable. I, seh, it must be admitted, neve' journeyed to Baltimore on that sad mission. I was in Frankfort, Kentucky, with my old friend, Judge Bleeker, seh, on a matter of business. A situation, seh—I might say, a dilemma—confronted us both suddenly——"

"Bleeker!" Archie sat down and whistled. "Old Judge Bleeker and you! Well, I guess—just grabbin' around at clues and suspicions and surmises—that, somehow, it has to do with liquor!"

"Seh," Colonel Tunk extended an arm loftily. "In the present fanatical and excited state o' public feelin' in this county, and with Miss Mollie president of the local Anti-Liquor League— Hush!"

"Old Bob Bleeker," mused Archie. "Well, I'm a son-av-a——"

"Your remains, seh," continued Colonel Tunk placidly, but with a keen look around, "came back in half-pint bottles. Your hermetically sealed casket, I can relate with satisfaction, held just two bar'ls of half-pint bottles, packed in excelsior; and they came over the State-line and into this county, where the vandals watch every automobile road and express-office with fiendish assiduity, with perfect safety and dispatch."

"Me!" yelped the ghost feebly. "Two bar'ls of half-pint bottles!"

"Twelve-year-old Bourbon, seh. It may be a source of pride to you, Archibald, to be the best whisky that I eve' was able to import since this glorious but fanatical republic made it a crime fo' a gentleman to take his little jigger every mawnin'. Your Granduncle Eli Tunk, seh, who passed away a decade ago at Hot Springs, was brought back to the family plot last May but the best he afforded was seven-year-old stuff; and as for your cousin Murray, he came back to repose among his forebears with no mo'en sixteen gallons of mountain-corn liquor to assuage and soften the sorrehs of the last remainin' membeh of the Tunk family."

"Cunnel!" gasped Archie. "You mean to say you got away with it?"

"Slowly, and with reverent hands, seh, I been lookin' up the family mortuary records and bringing each prodigal son home to rest where he'll do mo' good than merely run up bills from the undertakers. As to you, Archie, you seemed perfectly safe—perfectly. Mournin' fo' you as I did, I didn't see why you should rest far away and alone in a Gove'ment cemetery. And when you turned up, seh, joyful as I was to greet you, I was beset with the knowledge that I had to have somebody in that family-vault to avert curiosity. Seh, that explains Smith, and allows me to give out what info'-mation I wish to the world concernin' him."

"Smith—Smith," murmured Captain Archie. "Seems like I heard that name before—H. P. Smith. Poor old Smith—Henry P. Smith. No wonder Mollie and I saw those two little chameleons doin' hootchy-kootchies over his slab! Maybe they each had a nip—communing with the spirits, as it were; and realizing what I do about the Tunks, it's my opinion, cunnel, that instead of dust to dust, as the Scriptures have it, our ancestors are more apt to turn to sour mash."

"Seh," said Colonel Tunk loftily, "as the last remainin' male descendent of the family, you should speak with mo' respect for yo' ancestors."

"I respect them as connoisseurs of hard liquor all right! Even if the service did teach me to be a total abstainer. But think of old Dr. Bascom preaching that touchin' sermon over a pine box full of Bourbon! And Cousin Mollie president of the county Anti-Liquor League! Say, cunnel?"

"Seh?"

"Suppose Smith turns up?"

"Impossible, seh!"

"The world's full of 'em. Suppose the Government Bureau claims these here ree-mains. You better step careful, old plotter! I'm going to get the car out and run out to the Coleman place for tea, and fill up these ree-mains of mine on beaten biscuit and cold ham, Southern style. Think of that blamed musty old buryin'-vault. Ow! It makes a hole in my stomach when I reflect on it!"

THE ghost uprose and dusted his trousers. Colonel Tunk watched him crank up the car and depart down the county-pike. Then he sighed and went to mix himself a toddy on the back-stairs, after which he dropped an empty half-pint bottle behind the wainscot. When he passed out, Mandy winked wisely as she went about the dinner preparations. She didn't know where Colonel Tunk got it, but his little jigger turned up every morning and twice thereafter during the day. Even the suspicious Miss Mollie, now and then, knew that spirits pervaded the back regions of the ancestral house, but that it was Henry Perkins Smith taking a little resurrection each day under the colonel's chaperonage never crossed her mind. Mollie merely winked to herself also.

Needless to say, the advent of Captain Archibald Belden Tunk, late of the Armenian relief work, and before that of the Argonne trenches, into the countryside homes of all the nice girls he knew, excited a sensation. As a ghost Archibald was an instant success. When the *Bugle* appeared with its congratulatory column containing a dignified interview with Colonel T. Sambola Tunk himself, which set forth briefly how the unfortunate mistake was made in Baltimore and a total stranger was interred in the private family-vault, Archie backed into a corner and threw up his hands:

"Blessed if I know! Don't ask me! I was the dead one, wasn't I? As for this Smith—poor devil—never heard of him before! Anybody mind if I take a little more of that shrimp salad? Since I came back from the Great Beyond, I got an appetite like a whale!"

"Anyhow, you're much nicer," commented Edith Coleman. "You and Bill were the village cutups before the war. You're rather mellowed now."

"Aged in wood," retorted Captain Tunk darkly. "Five months in the family-tomb'll sober anybody; er—come to think of it, maybe it wouldn't in our family!"

And the Tunk ghost grinned wisely and took a partner for a dance.

It was on the way home that Cousin Mollie burst out with a confidence:

"Archie, what do you think we did, Edith and I? We thought it was awful about Smith. Perhaps somewhere there's a family waiting and watching in vain for news of him. I can appreciate it after those dreadful months when we thought you had been killed. Edith has a friend who's connected with the War Department at Washington, so we wrote him a letter all about Smith, and couldn't they trace his people."

"What?" gurgled Archie. "Oh, no! Let Smith rest in peace!"

"But his family. Even the worst news is better than suspense."

"Family! Why he—his family—it's contraband—outlawed—impossible!"

"What on earth is the matter with you?"

"I—" Archie felt of his Adam's apple and swallowed it hurriedly. "See here, Mollie! For the honor of the Tunks—for decency's sake and everything—you cut this out, now! I tell you, cut it out! That fool *Bugle* editor wired this yarn out everywhere it seems, and it—it's a nation-wide sensation. There may be a million dog-gone Smiths who left home and never came back, and maybe about forty relations will claim these ree-mains!"

"Well, suppose they do? They're entitled to 'em, aren't they?"

"Gosh, no! You—you'll start a riot," faltered the captain. "You and the Coleman girls let this Smith business alone. He—he and me—our ree-mains, as it were—kind o' mixed up by that fool Gove'ment red-tape, but we're both happy. Smith, he's gone to his reward and me, I'm full of sandwiches and things; but don't stir those bureaucrats in Washington up to digging into our mortuary records. The cunnel, poor old codger, 'll be pained and grieved. He's been going up there every day putting flowers on my grave with reverent hands, and Smith can't kick; nor any of his family. You girls let the cunnel settle this business."

"But he can't now. Because Edith Coleman got a letter right back from her today, and she wrote the sweetest, dearest letter thanking everybody! Seems that they located her the very first thing!"

"Who? What?"

"His widow. Mrs. Henry Perkins Smith."

"Help!" yelled the captain, dodging a mud-hole dizzily. "Widow! Oh, no!"

"She did! Said she had heard of Colonel Tunk's beautiful care for her dear husband's remains, and what a grand man he was and everything; and she's coming here to thank him personally and everything."

Captain Archibald Belden Tunk stopped the car just as it turned in the avenue among the ancestral oaks. The big house was dark, but his headlight cast a ray of light far up the hill under the magnolias upon the ancient tomb of the Tunks of Mississippi City, Mississippi.

"Mollie, you didn't! You're crazy, and so's Mrs. Smith! This guy you buried, he—well, she—Mrs. Smith is a—mistaken. That's all. We don't want any widda snoopin' around here after him. She'd be a —— nuisance, and the cunnel, he—he's got kind o' attached to Smith now. Puttin' flowers on his slab and everything. The poor old cunnel has kind o' run out of ancestors now, and he'd like to hang onto this H. P. Smith a while. Did she say she wanted to remove these—ree-mains?"

"Of course she wants to. Their family home is in Cincinnati."

Archie helped her out by the garage.

"Cincinnati me eye! She's mistaken, that's all. I wish that I had stayed in Armenia or Hades or somewhere out o' sight!"

"Archie, what in the world is the matter with you? It's perfectly plausible, but you talk like a lunatic. If you hadn't sworn off in the Army, I'd think you'd been drinking!"

"It's Smith," gulped Archie dismally, "and this widda—I'll bet she's some old battle-ax that'll worry the cunnel into his grave."

AND it was the following morning that Mandy, coming in from the R. F. D. box on the county road, laid by Colonel Tunk's breakfast plate a square black-margined envelope. Mollie and Captain Archibald saw it simultaneously. Cousin Mollie had just seated herself and no opportunity had presented itself yet to tell Colonel Tunk the news.

Now she rested her dimpled chin on her white hands and watched expectantly. Across from her the ghost from Armenia dug widly down in his egg-cup. It wasn't until, watching covertly, he saw Colonel Tunk's hand tremble as he read the missive that Archibald glanced up guiltily.

Then abruptly Colonel T. Sambola Tunk arose and strode. They saw him disappear wordlessly behind the back stairs. Presently came a curious gurgle, a gentle fall behind the wainscot. After that it was so still one could have heard a cork drop.

"There goes a half-pint," murmured Archie absently.

"A—what?" said Mollie staring after the colonel's retreat.

"Er—Smith. It's that widda, my dear coz. Got the cunnel all upset. Here she comes hornin' into this business, tryin' to separate the cunnel from his good departed friend, Smith."

"Well, why in the name of all that's silly shouldn't she?" Mollie was round-eyed with indignant interest. "Why should the colonel feel upset over the removal of the remains of a man he never saw or heard of until five months after he buried him by mistake in the family-tomb?"

"That's it."

"What?"

"Movin' Smith. He might—jingle."

"What's the matter with you, anyway, Archie? *Jingle?*"

Archie uprose and waved his napkin feebly.

"Never mind. Poor old cunnel!" and he, too, went out the back way.

He found Colonel Tunk reading again the Widow Smith's daintily written and feelingly worded note of gratitude. If a pint-size ghost of Henry Perkins Smith had suddenly appeared and blown up suddenly until he was the size of the Tunk back pasture lot, Colonel Tunk could not have looked more abysmally flabbergasted.

"Seh!" he whispered, and extended the letter silently.

"Never mind," said Archie reassuringly, "there ain't no such animal as the Widda Smith so why be scared of her?"

"She says so, seh!"

"That's all right. Take her in, cunnel. Entertain her; kid the old girl along until we see some way out. Says she must at least lay a wreath of immortelles on his grave. Say, what she ought to bring is a basket of mint. I'll hook some sugar, cunnel, and we'll hold a service for Smith that'll bring five generations of Tunks out of their tombs upstanding."

"Seh, this woman must not be allowed on the place."

"You try to stop her and she'll raise a row and only attract more notoriety to this mixup. And you know what the penalty is in this State for shippin' in booze, to say nothing of the Federal amendment. No, you got to soothe the widda's feelin's and assuage her grief.

"If she's got a missin' husband named Henry Perkins Smith, why you can't go ahead and deny it now. Any more publicity about it and the coroner or somebody'll want to open up that casket. Old Omar Khayyam said he wanted to be buried so that every unbeliever passin' by would lick his chops, but he couldn't do it in these States under the dry amendment, cunnel."

"Never mind Omar, seh. This Smith woman arrives tomorrow, but as a matter of fact she writes like a lady."

"You better go meet her at the train and keep her away from the hotel. The one best bet for you, cunnel, is to avoid people talkin'. Some fool coroner or health officer or somebody may go to buttin' in if the Widda Smith is allowed to tell her troubles around town. You got to persuade her to let friend Smith stay right where he is. You got to be her sympathetic friend, cunnel, with a heart that bleeds every time you think of her bereavement.

"Tell her that her H. P. Smith does honor to the Tunks, lyin' there so still among 'em. I'll loan you my funeral sermon, cunnel, and you can read it to her and I'll join in and we'll all weep together. Why if that missin' husband of hers, who was shipped somewhere from a Baltimore hospital, accordin' to her letter, never turns up, we're all fine and happy. Buck up, cunnel!"

Colonel Tunk sighed heavily and went into the house. He refused to be heartened; and besides, he reflected, if this nephew of his had only stayed in Armenia, this Widow Smith Nemesis wouldn't be camping on his trail. Colonel Tunk feared all widows, and one who wrote him with the gratitude that Mrs. Henry Perkins Smith voiced in her letter was doubly dangerous. She'd hang on his shoulder, perhaps, at the tomb and weep through his linen coat and sob out the virtues and endearments of Henry, the departed.

"I must lie, seh, like a gentleman, and a bootlegger," he reflected.

And it was with all his lofty equanimity—on the outside at least—that Colonel Tunk set forth on the delicate mission of meeting Mrs. Henry Perkins Smith. The colonel abhorred gas-wagons, so, arrayed in his best linen trousers and black mohair coat, he set forth in the surrey which he had purchased the year of the Cotton Exposition; with Hogjaw, his best-mannered field-hand, driving. From the rear seat Colonel Tunk waved to Mollie and the captain, who were setting off for a round of golf at the country club grounds.

"Archie," said Miss Mollie determinedly, "let's dine at the club; it'll be awful to hear the colonel and the widow sit there and discuss Smith."

"You're on. I guess I'll let the old boy handle her. He'll give her all the old family history and show her all the oil-painted Tunks stuck around the dinin'-room, and she can descant on the late Henry Perkins and his virtues."

They whizzed past the colonel with frolicsome greeting. A mile down the pike Archie had to dodge to the ditch to avoid a big green touring-car that roared on past the country club corner. Looking back, they saw Colonel Tunk's pair of bays rear up wildly when the monster honked on its way.

The colonel jammed his panama over his eyes and turned indignantly while Hogjaw was quieting the span. And he saw the big green car rush a corner and up into the quiet poplar avenue leading to his ancestral home.

"Hogjaw, seh," said the colonel sternly, "who were those persons?"

"Those pussons am a lady, cunnel—and she's done gittin' out at de big house."

Colonel Tunk started apprehensively and frowned. Then round about he sent his ancient equipage. The big green car stood untenanted before his porticoed mansion. No one was on the veranda. No one in the double parlors. In the kitchen he found black Mandy staring out frightenedly.

"Missus Smif," ejaculated Mandy, "and she done gone up dyah!"

"*Ahem*," said the colonel, and straightening his tie and buttoning his coat he strode up the gravel toward the family vault on the hill. With a nervous trepidation he recalled Nephew Archie's last warning—"Now, don't let this old girl beat you to the first punch, cunnel!"

BUT when the colonel rounded the stone mausoleum he felt palpitatingly that she had. She stood there before the grated door, peering in—a slender, black-robed figure, relieved by just one burst of color and that was the armful of roses that she carried. And she was curiously inspecting something she had picked up at her feet.

It was a cork, a half-pint cork; and Colonel Tunk stood rubbing his chin with more dire apprehension. How did that fool cork come there?

The widow sighed and put her handkerchief to her mouth, patting it resignedly. Then she turned, seeing him. Colonel Tunk bowed grandly.

"Mrs. Smith, I presume?"

She was watching him with great, dark sorrowful eyes, and the colonel palpitated within. Never had the Tunk plantation given refuge to such a vision. In her mourning she had the mode, the grace, the smoothness of the woman who knows how to wear things best. She wasn't young, the colonel hastily decided, and yet she wasn't old. If her hair had a touch of silver above her small ears it but enhanced her petiteness.

"*Ah-hem!*" murmured Colonel Tunk, and took a determined glance into her eyes. They were soft dark eyes looking up at him sympathetically now.

"Yes," she said appealingly. "Did you mind me coming here? You were not at the house and the servant told me to wait. But I wanted to see—dear Henry. How you have cared for him—the flowers, and everything!"

"Seh—ma'am—I—he—wo'ds fail me, ma'am. We appreciate—we—ma'am, were glad to have him. No, seh—not that, exactly, but——"

"I know. You are a dear, kind gentleman. I know all about it, colonel, and I—we—the family can never forget your solicitude for—Henry."

What tenderness in that glance she gave him! It had been years since Colonel Tunk's chivalry had felt such appeal.

He waved a courtly hand to the flower-covered slab within the iron grating.

"Our po' feeble efforts, seh—ma'am, fo' your revered husband, who, I understand, gave his life fo' his country as gallantly as any hero on the field of battle——"

"He was a mutton inspector in a purchasing department."

"Yes, yes, I know, ma'am." Colonel Tunk didn't know, but he was glad for even this irrelevant clue to Henry Perkins.

"Your dear, gallant nephew, Captain Tunk, was restored to you as by a miracle, I hear."

"Yes, ma'am—walked in on us as a ghost from the grave, scarin' my house-servants into conniption fits, ma'am; and with an appetite like a horse. With our joy, ma'am, came our utter sadness to learn of—of Mr. Smith."

She dabbled the handkerchief to her nose, and when the colonel unlocked the family-vault she silently laid her offering on Henry's tomb. With a cautious sniff Colonel Tunk looked at the iron plate on the stone slab that held Henry secure. With her back to him the widow gave a poignant little sob. Reverently the colonel waited and presently touched her arm.

"Our home, ma'am, is at your service while here. We feel, Mrs. Smith, that as time heals your grief, you will feel differently about removing er—Mr. Smith."

"Oh, I couldn't! I must take him back to Cincinnati!"

She spoke with distinct eagerness. Colonel Tunk bowed. On the way to the house he alluded to the honor he felt in having Henry Perkins Smith in the tomb of his ancestors, and delicately she thanked him, but demurred.

And when Mollie and the captain came rolling in at dusk, the latter gave one incredulous stare up on the front veranda.

"Oh, Mollie—Oh! Who's the chicken?"

"Hush up," whispered Mollie; but when these two came on and met Colonel Tunk's grave introduction, she, also, gasped incredulously.

Mrs. Henry Perkins Smith was all sweetly, reservedly animated. In an hour Archibald was eating from her hand; and Mollie, unbending, despite herself, to the charm and graciousness of Smith's widow. With the utmost delicacy she related her six months' search through Government channels for Inspector Smith after his sad demise in the Baltimore hospital, and how, but for Captain Archie's turning-up, she never would have found him.

He had been a devoted husband, a dear, rare fellow, she concluded with poignant resignation that made Colonel Tunk blink in the dusk.

"At twenty dollars a quart," mused Archie, "Henry is *dear*, all right!"

And the next day it rained. Nobody could go out. The widow played sad, sweet old things with Colonel Tunk leaning over the piano. After a too, too sympathetic glance at her appealing eyes, Colonel Tunk would retire behind the back-stairs and mix a melancholy toddy.

"Archie, seh," he sighed, "if it quits rainin' I am goin' to drive Mrs. Smith over to Judge Brandegee's fo' a call. We must take her mind off this—bereavement."

"You better first get it off your breath, cunnel! You told me your limit was a half-pint a day, but you been hittin' 'em higher'n that. If I was you I'd go make a clean breast of it to this poor lady!"

"And consign her, seh, to further fruitless wanderin's and searchin's fo' her departed husband? No, seh, I hope to persuade her to—to prolong her visit, seh; to allow Henry Perkins Smith to rest as he is."

"Hey?" said Archie interestedly. "You—colonel! All spruced up, today!"

Colonel Tunk dusted his panama and took Mrs. Smith to drive. Sunday night he took her to tea at the Colemans'. Tuesday he induced her to golf a bit; and Mollie gasped to find her on the club veranda with half the benign old gentlemen of the countryside about her chair. Young sprigs tried to worm in on the charming widow also, but she seemed distinctly to prefer the old boys with cloves on their breaths.

ALL that rainy week Mrs. Henry Perkins Smith was a house-guest, not only of Colonel Tunk, but of other first families. The widow relented a bit from her melancholy detachment; it was rumored that she had mixed a julep for old Judge Brandegee, and had been admitted to the Gilfishes' private wine-cellar; and everywhere Colonel Sambola Tunk followed her with holy devotion, pride and humility.

"Archie!" gasped Mollie. "What do you think of that? The colonel hasn't cared a rap about society in twenty years and look what that widow's doin' to him, despite her mournin'!"

"Got both Judge Brandegee and Senator Casewell callin' on her Sunday night offerin' condolences, I reckon; and between you and me the widda's sittin' up takin' notice."

"It—it's almost scandalous, the way she's wormed her way into all these old county families through these old geezers who ain't used to a woman takin' notice of 'em. I'll bet she isn't more than forty!"

"Well, if you girls had half her stuff, Mollie, you'd be wonders! Sympathy—sym-path-ee! That's where she get's em! It's enough to make poor old Henry P. turn over in his bottle!"

"His *what?*"

"Oh, neve' mind! There she goes up the hill now on her daily pilgrimage to Henry's grave. Look at the colonel, all diked out in new pongee pants, wonderin' if he dare follow and intrude on her grief."

"It's awful," burst out Mollie, "the way he moons around! Every time she goes up there, he goes up there!"

She darted a vigorous, irreverent finger toward the family burying-plot.

"He'd better," said the captain, darkly. "A little widda is a dangerous thing. He's trying to distract her mind from Henry Perkins, I reckon."

"What's she so interested in our family for? Yesterday I was waiting for Edith in the ladies' parlor of the Maddox House when Mrs. Smith came in and wrote a telegram. Bell-hop came for it, and then he brought it back, because there was some bother about the address. The widow was in the telephone booth, and the boy laid the telegram down just where I couldn't help glancing at it. And what do you think it said?"

"Send more flowers for Henry?" suggested Archie hopefully.

"No! It was just mysterious. It read: 'See File No. 3225—Tunk; File No. 3231—Gilfish; File No. 3298—Tunk.' Archie, what in the world do you think?"

"Must be something official about this mix-up. Me and Henry gettin' our reemains all balled up in the Government hospital," said Archie. "Gosh, I hope they don't finally decide that I'm the dead one!"

"And what do you think, then?"

"Me? I don't think. The cunnel's got to do the thinkin'."

"But she left her hand-bag lying near me when she telephoned, and sticking out of it, by accident, I saw a—a—monkey-wrench!"

"A what?"

"A teeny, brand-new little monkey-wrench!"

Captain Tunk looked puzzled. He whistled and crossed his legs.

"Maybe," he opined solemnly, after some thought, "that she's got a spirit message from the other world. Maybe Henry's stuck outside the pearly gates, and he's plottin' to take 'em off their hinges some time when the guardian angels ain't lookin', and sneak in."

"Oh, my goodness me! Aren't you gettin' afraid of her?"

"I ain't had a chance, Mollie—with all these old bald-headed boobs hangin' around her all the time. I just want her to stop buzzin' around about Henry. Those blamed Government bureau chaps have already had me dead on the records and may be they'd rather insist on it than try to untangle all the red-tape mess."

"You're the livest thing around here this season."

"Except Smith. Give Henry half a chance and he'd be the real speed-demon in these parts. On Judgment day, when Smith—" and then Archie sat up straightly, stared at the Widow Smith in the afternoon sunlight there alone before the resting-place of Tunks dead and gone; and then at Colonel T. Sambola Tunk, all youthfully tricked out, sitting on the fence back of the house lot.

"Resurrection," whispered Archie: "Monkey-wrench—Oh, my prophetic reemains! cunnel!"

And leaving Mollie staring and amazed at his mystery, Archie disappeared. He immediately reappeared through the kitchen, past the astounded Mandy, elbowing her aside, and reached Colonel Tunk, who was still gazing after the widow wistfully.

"Cunnel!" repeated Archie. "Is that vault door opened?"

"Opened? Sut'iny, seh. Mrs. Smith has the keys, seh, now, always. She is up there layin' flowers as usual on the slab, seh, and at her customary hour of devotion."

"Dabbin' her eye with a lavender-bordered handkerchief, I suppose, and reflectin' on the virtues and achievements of Mutton Inspector Smith. Oh, cunnel!"

"Seh?"

"Look out!"

"Seh?"

"This here sacred hour of the widda's! How have you been accustomed to bustin' in on Smith every mornin' for your little jigger of hooch?"

"How? I merely remove, seh, the little iron plate by unscrewing the bolts, and take out my little half-pint jigger each mawnin."

"And a couple of times you dropped a cork, and—hold on; she's lookin'!"

Archie dropped behind the hedge and wigwagged Colonel Tunk. The latter uprose with dignity and grasped his cane firmly.

"Mrs. Smith, seh, is not lookin'. She has gone in fo' her accustomed reflective hour with what she believes is her dear departed. At such a time, seh——"

"You're lost," whispered Archie. "Go

head her off—quick! Confront her, cunnel, and remember that from the walls of our old vault forty Tunks look down upon you!"

"Archibald, seh, I but yesterday persuaded the dear lady to leave Smith remain where he is. A matter of sentiment, seh, which as a kindred soul——"

"That doesn't help! You'll get pinched for blockade-runnin', that's what, with Uncle Eli and Cousin Murray Tunk and all the bunch. You never brought their remains back home at all, and when the sheriff looks 'em up——"

Colonel Tunk arose grandly. Far be it from him to listen to calumnies.

"Come with me, seh. Indelicate as it is to intrude on this sacred hour, I wish you to see the depths of her grief. I can swear to it, seh!"

Archie gave him one curious glance and followed. They crossed the soft turf back of the ancient vault, and Colonel Tunk was about to place a firm foot on the graveled walk, when his nephew stopped him.

"Listen?" breathed the latter. "Did you ever hear a ghost gurgle? It's Smith!"

On the evening air there did come a curious sound. A tinkle, a sobbing trickle, and yet a sort of joyous note. It made Colonel Tunk's mouth water, despite a sudden perturbation at his heart. Archibald listened again, and then he backed away with a whisper.

"This isn't none of *my* funeral! Not this time, cunnel!"

COLONEL TUNK watched his departure back to the house-hedge with composure, apparently. At least if there was a crisis he was the Tunk equal to it. Squaring his shoulders he stepped around and looked within his ancestral tomb. Mrs. Henry Perkins Smith was there, and she was bending over Henry's slab.

She was deftly removing an article or two. Then she held a half-pint bottle to the light, inspected it with a nonchalant eye and poured it as a libation before Uncle Eli's marble niche. Then she laughed demurely, and with the little monkey-wrench began tightening the bolts on the oblong iron plate that marked the end—at least one end—of Henry Perkins Smith.

The colonel watched her slim little hand strain at the wrench-handle. Tightening Henry up so that the casual observer would not notice that he had been tampered with, was no easy task. The colonel felt almost constrained to assist her, but he waited without.

A high resolve had come to Colonel Tunk, one mighty beam of light through the abysmal depths into which Smith had consigned him. A Napoleonic *coup* was needed or he was undone forever.

When he heard the rustle of her black silken gown he made an apologetic cough to let the widow know he was at his customary vigil outside. They were wont to stroll on up the wooded hill of evenings after Mrs. Smith's devotional hour. Now when she came out, closing her little beaded bag with a satisfied smile, the colonel even heard the monkey-wrench clink gently against a half-pint of Smith in that bag. But he raised his hat with more than his usual suavity.

"Evenin', ma'am."

"Good evening, colonel."

"Clearin' weather."

"Isn't it grand just to be alive?" There was brimming come-hitherness in her voice; her eye shot a merry little twinkle up at the colonel's.

"Alive? Oh, undoubtedly, as my nephew frequently remarks."

"I should think he would!" murmured the widow pensive now. "And that makes me remember. Don't you realize it is time we made the final arrangements for the removal of my dear departed husband's remains to Cincinnati? I've been here two weeks—your guest, Colonel Tunk."

"Why Cincinnati, Ohio? Mr. Smith, ma'am, I feel he belongs here, now. And you—you've brought two weeks of—of—well, seh, ma'am, couldn't you make it a little longer?"

She was looking at her trim feet as she sat on the ancient iron seat on the pathway.

"Longer? You have been so good, as it is. So delicately good in my—sorrow. I feel somehow, I have abused your hospitality."

Colonel Tunk was seated now. His hand touched her shoulder as he turned to look at her averted face.

"Sorreh, ma'am, is the bond between us, I feel. Grief, I might say, has sealed a—Ah, it has endeared you to us, ma'am. And Cincinnati, Ohio——"

"It will be lonely there," she sighed.

The colonel could have sworn that tears

were in her dark eyes. At least she patted them with a handkerchief and then had to cease, for the colonel took her hand away.

"Lonely as my house, ma'am, with you departed, Mrs. Smith, seh—ma'am—I am askin' you to stay—its mistress."

He felt her start. Then she was staring at him, and laughed almost wildly. He wouldn't let her withdraw her fingers from his own.

"Colonel!"

"And marry me, ma'am!"

"Colonel!"

"Are you thinkin' of Smith, laid in this untimely grave?"

"Smith!" She suddenly turned on him, her eyes filled with tears, but laughter struggling through them. "Smith—is a myth!"

"You astound me," said the colonel solemnly.

"Listen, you dear unsuspecting, charming man! There isn't any Smith. I'm not his widow! My name is Preston—Mrs. Laura Preston, and I've been a widow nine years. And I—colonel—am an agent of the United States prohibition enforcement branch of the Secret Service, sent into this county to get acquainted with—with certain persons who are breaking the law. And I used you to—Oh, forgive me!"

And then a strange thing happened. She seemed about to cry and Colonel Tunk uprose and clasped Mrs. Henry Perkins Smith in his arms to stop it. And she let him do it. She didn't say a word for a moment and then she began to murmur brokenly against his new alpaca coat.

"I just hate myself for this! I just hate that work. I wish I had never seen you, or any one here where you've been so good! It was all my work, but I thought you were a blockade-runner in this county!"

"Me, ma'am—a bootleggers' agent!"

"I know better now. It was all for your own self. But these family funerals—Cousin Murray and Uncle Eli."

"They have all gone," murmured Colonel Tunk lugubriously, "to the last pint, ma'am. All but about seven gallons of—Smith!"

"Oh, I know! I've just investigated, and my suspicions were right—and it was Smith did it, in the first place when he was Archie!"

"Seh—ma'am?"

"In the Atlanta baggage-room where he, he was transferred—Smith jingled! I just happened to be passing and I had a—hunch, colonel!"

"Comin' to think of it now, ma'am, he was just one pint short to the bar'l!"

"But we couldn't interfere when we thought it was poor Archibald. It was the unknown Smith that gave me my chance to track you down. Oh, colonel!"

Colonel Tunk was majestically silent; but he still held Smith's widow to his heart, even if in her hand-bag he did hear Smith jingle against the monkey-wrench.

"Well, dear Mrs. Laura Preston, if I may say so, seh—ma'am—what are you goin' to do now? I—confess to—Henry Perkins Smith, ma'am. And what—as a Federal agent are you goin' to do now?"

"I think I'll draw a little red line through my report on this case to the chief, and mark it: 'closed.' They'll take my word for it. Then I'll resign."

"And then—please, ma'am?"

"I'll marry you, old dear!"

"Come on, lady mine, to the house." Colonel Tunk turned grandly to wave to the tomb of his ancestors: "Let Smith jingle and be dashed!"

CONCERNING PIKERS

by JOHN W. WEAVER

WELL, boys, that's twicet I win. I leave it lay.
"The works or nothin' "—that's me every time.
Four Jewish flags I blow, four lovely bucks.
It's sugar in your mouth!—How's that? All set?
Go get 'em, dices!—Wham!—Read 'em and weep!

Oh, Snake-eyes, acety-ace—you done me wrong!
Craps, and I lose the works. . . . All right, I'm through.
It ain't no use to buck the jinx, but listen,
Brother, I may be right in a few minutes,
And when I am—look out for your gol' teeth.

My motter's "play 'em hard or else not any."
I got no use at all for these here pikers
That drags down every time they makes a pass.
A piker is a guy that plays it safe,
And that's the place I'll say they always ends,
Safe where they started in. You tell 'em, brother.

Don't get me wrong, though. All the flops is full
O' suckers that takes a chancet on anythin'.
You gotta use judgment. But a piker, now,
They got no faith in nothin', not even theirself.

Dick Finch, he was a goof like what I mean.
Well, this bird has a job down to a shoe-store,
Gets just enough to keep his bones together,
And keeps the same job seven bloomin' years
Without no raise. He come to me one day
And spills a moanin' howl. It was like this,
He says, his old man keeps a little store
Out to the West Side, sellin' fruit and such.
Now they's a mortgage on it, comin' due,
And if he can't raise six hundred cold bucks
By three weeks from that day, his pa is ruint.

I stands there for a minute. Then I says—
"How much dough do you think that you can raise
Right now?" He fishes in his pockets then,
And hauls me out a roll o' dirty bills.

"Thirty-three dollars. All I saved this year."

"Now, listen, Bud, just how much do you care
About your pa? Enough to take a chancet
On losin' all o' this to save his neck?"

He gulps and nods his head. "You bet I do."

"Well, then, I'm gonna give you somep'n straight.
This dough is all you got. You got no ways
O' gettin' hold o' no six hunderd dollars,
Not with no job like yourn. They's just one way:
You go down to the track this afternoon.
Now in the third race, they's a dog name' 'Lucas.'
Two birds I know has got that mule in pickle,

And somep'n tells me that today's the day
They set to make a killin'. Nobody knows
Exceptin' me and them about him, see?
I got a-plenty right now on his nose.
You go down there, and find the nearest bookie,
And put the whole roll on this skate—to win!"

He sorter trembles. "What, the whole darn roll?"

"That's what I said, you hearn me," answers me.
"If I ain't right, you lose. But even then
Your pa ain't no worse off than he is now.
And it's a good tip what I'm givin' you.
The odds you get'll be twenty to one,
And if that plater romps in to the merry,
You draw down what you need, six hunderd frog-skins,
And sixty more besides. Now, I ain't sayin'
That this is no sure thing. But it's a chancet,
And a durn good one. So hop to it, fella,
And just this one time say, 'The works or nothin'.' "

Honest, you should of saw what this bird done.
I thought the pore durn simp was goin' to kiss me.
I give him a shove, and off he puts a-runnin'.

That night I seen this Finch down to the pool-room.
I walks right up and clouts him on the back.
"Well, sport, we sorter knocked 'em for a gool,
I'll tell the world we did—why, what's the matter?"
I looks again. This Finch starts in to blubber,
"Oh, God!—Oh, God!—" and he can't get no further.

I grabs his shoulders, gives him one good shake.
"Say, what the what?" I says. "This Lucas win.
He walks in backwards, like I told you, don't he?
What're you yellin' about? Your pa is saved,
You got a nest-egg over, too—but wait—
You went there, didn't you?"

"Yeh, I went," he blubbers.
"I seen the prices—Lucas, twenty to one.
I has my money in my hand, and walks up
And gets right to the bookie—then a somep'n
It seems to scare me. I gets thinkin' how
Everythin' that I got is in my hand.
And sorter sudden-like my knees starts tremblin',
And then—I guess I must of gotten crazy
Just for a minute, and——"

"Go on, go on!"
I hollers, feelin' sick.

"Oh, God—I done
Like what I allus do—I took and bought
A two-buck ticket for this horse to show,
Just as the bettin' closed . . ."

Well, can you beat it?
I guess a piker oncet, a piker forever.
It's in the blood, you see?

Gimme them bones!

A Scout for Virginia

by Hugh Pendexter

A Four-Part Story

CONCLUSION

Author of "Red Belts," "Kings of the Missouri," etc.

CHAPTER XI

BACK TO THE BLUE WALL

WE REACHED the Ohio and I soon found a canoe. The trip down the Scioto had its danger thrills, and twice we narrowly escaped meeting bands of warriors on the main trace. I stuck to the path because of its advantages. None below us knew we had left the upper town, and would not be looking for us. In the beaten path there was much less chance of leaving signs for some scout to pick up and follow. I knew warriors would be scouring the country in all directions once the news of our escape was carried to Chillicothe, but the Scioto path was the last one they would expect us to take.

I had remembered lost sister's warning and planned to follow the Big Sandy until its headwaters interlocked with those of the Clinch and Holston. It was nerve-wearing work, that crossing of the Ohio. With each dip of the paddle I expected rifles to crack behind me and canoes to poke their noses through the overhanging foliage and make after us. I could not see that the girl breathed during the crossing, and I kept her in front of me as her face was a mirror to reflect instantly any danger on the Indian shore.

We landed at the mouth of Four-Mile Creek without any disturbing incidents. I told her we were four miles above the mouth of the Scioto and she was for placing more distance between us and that river at once. But it was impossible to travel all the time. Now we were foot-free, and as I had my rifle the Shawnees would pay high before catching up with us, I assured her. I had been at Four-Mile Creek the year before to survey five hundred acres of good bottom-land for Patrick Henry, and was of course familiar with the locality.

Five hundred yards back from the Ohio was an old fort. I took the girl there to rest while I patched our moccasins. The Indians said this structure was so ancient that no one knew who built it. As a matter of fact it was the remains of George Croghan's stone trading-house. Traces of an Indian town, antedating the fort, were also to be observed. Very possibly it was occupied by the Shawnees before they built their first town at the mouth of the Scioto on the west bank. It was from this Scioto town that Mary Ingles escaped in 1755, and the history of her daring and hardships rather belittled my feat in bringing Patricia from the upper town.

The poor girl continued extremely nervous and I feared she would collapse. Now that she had tasted freedom she feared the Indians were hot on our trail. Her gaze was constantly roving to the Ohio. She was fearing to behold the Shawnees paddling across to recapture us. The moccasins had to be mended, however, as the night travel down the Scioto path had sadly damaged them.

As I sewed the whangs through the rips and hastily patched the holes I could see her worriment was increasing. That period of delay was more trying to her fortitude than when we were making the détour around Chillicothe and our very lives hung on luck, or the mercy of her *Manito*.

"There is something in the river," she whispered, her slight figure growing rigid.

"Only a log," I told her.

"Look! Isn't there something moving in the bushes?" And she clutched my arm.

"Only the wind ruffling the tops," I soothed.

She was silent for a few minutes and then confessed:

"I dread and hate the river, Basdel. I wish we could get out of sight of it."

"It's a short trip in the canoe to the Big Sandy."

"And with the possibility of an Indian hiding behind every stump and log along the shore!"

"Then we will hide the canoe and strike across the bend. A few creeks to cross, and inside of two days we should reach the Big Sandy. It's about thirty-five miles and there is the blaze left by the surveyors. Do you wish that? It will be harder for your feet than riding in the canoe. It may be easier on your nerves."

"Anything, Basdel, to get away from the river! And can't we start now? I know we shall see the Indians coming across to catch us if we stay here much longer."

I tossed her her moccasins and quickly mended mine and put them on. Leaving her to wait until I could draw up the canoe and hide it, I proceeded to conceal all traces of our landing as best I could, and then told her I was ready.

The bottoms on this side of the river are narrower than on the Indian shore, and the old surveyors' blaze proved to be a wet path. The small creeks were bordered with cane and when we encountered them it was hard on the girl. But she minded hardships none, and once we were out of sight of the river she regained some of her spirits. But a glimpse of the blue river brought back her old fears as though the Ohio were some monster able to reach out and seize her.

Before night I proved the river could be good to us. Against her will I had swung down to the shore and was leading her along a narrow beach in order to escape a bad tangle of briers when I had the good fortune to discover a *bateau* lodged against the bank. The girl begged me not to go near it although it was obviously empty. I insisted and was rewarded with a bag containing a bushel of corn. Now we could have cooked it in our kettle had we been provided with that indispensable article. As it was there was life in munching the corn.

The undergrowth was a nuisance, being composed of pea-vines, clover, nettles, cane and briery berry bushes. The nettles, too, constituted a grave menace because of the ease with which they broke down. Wherever the foot was placed a print was left. Even the tracks of wild turkeys were discernible.

I would not stop to camp until I could reach a tract free from the stuff. As a result it was nearly sunset by the time we halted in a mixed growth of hickory, ironwood and ash on the banks of a tiny creek. Here we could pick a path that left no signs. We rested a bit and then followed the creek toward its outlet for half a mile and came to a log cabin.

The girl dropped to the ground, glaring as if we were beholding the painted head of a Shawnee. I assured her it was a white man's cabin and probably empty. Leaving her behind an elm, I scouted the place and satisfied myself there had been no recent visitors there. I called for her to join me and proudly displayed an iron kettle I had found by the door. But when I would have left her to make the kettle boil while I looked for a turkey, she refused to stay and insisted on accompanying me.

Fortunately I perched a turkey within two hundred feet of the cabin. I hung the kettle in the fireplace and built a good fire under it and then dressed the turkey. For some reason the girl preferred the open to the cabin and remained outside the door. As I finished my task she called to me excitedly. Grabbing my rifle, I ran out. She was pointing dramatically at a big blaze on a mulberry-tree. The scar was fresh, and on it some one had written with a charred stick:

Found some people killed here. We are gone down this way. DOUGLASS.

"What does it mean?" she whispered, her eyes very big as she stared at the dusky forest wall.

"That would be James Douglass," I mused. "He came down here with Floyd's surveying-party last Spring. I wonder who was killed."

"Enough to know the Indians have been here," she said, drawing closer to me. "Can't we go the way they did and be safe?"

"We might make it. But 'gone down this way' means they started for New Orleans. A long, roundabout journey to Williamsburg."

"Oh, never that! I didn't understand," she cried. "I will be braver. But if the nearest way home was by the Ohio I would go by land. Anything but the river! Remember your promise that we are not to be taken alive. Now let's push on."

"And leave this excellent shelter?" I protested.

"Men have been killed here. I can't abide it. A few miles more—please."

Of course she had her own way, but I made her wait until we had cooked some corn to a mush and I had broiled the turkey. I could have told her it would be difficult for us to select any spot along the river which had not been the scene of a killing. So we took the kettle and left a stout, snug cabin and pushed on through the darkness to the top of a low ridge, where I insisted we must camp. We made no fire.

I estimated the day's travel to have been twelve miles at the least, which was a good stint for a man, let alone a girl unused to the forest. Nor had the work wearied her unduly. At least she had gained something from her captivity—a strength to endure physical hardships which she had never known before. With good luck and half-way decent footing I believed another sunset would find us at the Big Sandy. That night was cold and I sorely regretted our lack of blankets.

BEFORE sunrise I had a fire burning and the kettle of mush slung on a green sapling for further cooking. Patricia was curled up like a kitten, and I recovered my hunting-shirt and slipped it on without her knowing I had loaned it to her for a covering. She opened her eyes and watched me a few moments without comprehending where she was. With a little cry she jumped to her feet and roundly upbraided me for not calling her to help in the work.

I pointed out a spring, and by the time she was ready to eat the hot mush and cold turkey, the fire was out and we were ready to march. Our lack of salt was all that prevented the meal from being very appetizing. We were not inclined to quarrel with our good fortune, however, but ate enough to last us the day. As the first rays touched the tops of the trees we resumed the journey.

We covered a good ten miles when we had our first serious mishap since leaving the Indian village. Patricia had insisted she be allowed to take the lead where the blazed trees made the trace easy to follow. I humored her, for she kept within a rod of me. We struck into a bottom and had to pick our way through a stretch of cane.

Afraid she might stumble on to a bear and be sadly frightened, I called on her to wait for me. But she discovered a blaze on a sycamore beyond the cane and hurried forward. Half-way through the cane she slipped on a wet root and fell on her side. Ordinarily the accident would not have been serious, but the moment I saw the expression of pain driving her face white I knew she was hurt. I dropped the kettle and picked her up. She winced and groaned and said it was her arm. I carried her to the high ground and made her sit while I examined her hurt. I expected to find the bone broken. I was happily disappointed, and yet she was hurt grievously enough. A section of cane had penetrated the upper arm near the shoulder, making a nasty wound. As the cane had broken off in the flesh it was necessary for me to play the surgeon. Using a pair of bullet-molds I managed to secure a grip on the ugly splinter and pull it out. She gave a little yelp, but did not move.

"The worst is over," I told her. "Now we must dress it."

Returning and securing the kettle, I dipped water from a spring and lighted a fire and hung the kettle to boil. Then I hunted for Indian medicine. I soon found it, the bark of a linn or bee-tree root. This I pounded and bruised with the butt of my rifle and threw it into the kettle to boil. Patricia remained very patient and quiet, her eyes following my every move.

"You're as useful as a housewife, Basdel," she remarked. "More useful than most women could be."

"Only a trick learned from the environment," I lightly replied. "Does it hurt much?" This was rhetorical, for I knew a stab wound from the cane smarted and ached most disagreeably.

"Not much," she bravely replied. "I'm sorry to bother you, though."

"You'll soon be as fit as a fiddle," I assured her. "Border men are continually helping each other in this fashion."

As soon as the kettle boiled I washed the wound in the liquid and made sure all of the cane had been removed. This additional probing caused her pain but she showed no signs not even by flinching. The application at once had a soothing effect. We waited until the medicine had cooked down to a jelly-like consistency, when I applied it as a salve, working it into and thoroughly covering the wound. Then I tied it up with a strip torn from her skirt. Rather rough surgery, but I knew it would be effective.

She bitterly lamented over the time we were losing, and blamed herself so severely that I finally consented to go on, providing she would keep behind me. Had the hurt been in her foot we would have been forced to camp for several days.

Toward night the country grew more broken and much rougher, and I knew we were nearing the Sandy. I feared she might trip over some obstacle, and we camped before the light deserted us. I told her we were within a few miles of the river and that we ought to strike it at the mouth of Savage Creek, some four or five miles from the Ohio. After starting a fire, she volunteered to remain and feed it while I looked for game. This in the way of doing penance, perhaps. I had the good luck to shoot a deer and we dined on venison.

After we had eaten she sat close by the fire and was silent for many minutes. That she was meditating deeply was shown by her indifference to the night sounds which usually perturbed her. The howling of the wolves, and the scream of a panther, leaping to make a kill, passed unheard. Suddenly she declared—

"You were right, Basdel."

"About what, Patsy?"

"About my not fitting in west of the mountains."

"That was said before you were tried. No woman, even border-born, could be more brave than you have been."

"And I was so wofully wrong when I made fun of your long rifle. I want you to forgive me."

"Patsy, don't. You are wonderful."

"Still being good to me, Basdel. But I know the truth now. Back over the mountains I was wicked enough to feel a little superior to frontier folks. No. Don't wave your hands at me. I must say it. I even felt a little bit of contempt for those brave women who went barefooted. God forgive me! I was a cat, Basdel. A vicious cat!"

"Good Heavens, Patsy! Say it all and have done with it. Call yourself a pirate."

She would not respond to my banter, but fell to staring into the handful of coals. Then the tears began streaming down her face, and at last she sobbed:

"Poor girl! Poor girl! She was a wonderful friend to me. She never had any chance, and you can never know how hard she tried to keep my spirits up; how ready she was to stand between me and harm—me, who has had every chance! And to end like that! And yet it was far worse to live like that. It's best as it is, but God must be very good to her to make up for what she lost. Tell me, Basdel, did she suffer much when she died?"

She could be talking only of Cousin's sister. I declared:

"She suffered none. It's best for her as it is."

She fell asleep with her back against a black walnut, and I spread my hunting-shirt over her, for the air was shrewdly cool. In the dying coals I saw pictures, wherein Kirst, Dale, and lost sister paraded in turn; the fate of each the result of race-hatred, and a race-avidity to possess the land. And a great fear came over me that the girl leaning against the walnut, the mass of blue-black hair seeming to bow down the proud head, was destined to be added to the purchase-price the frontier was ever paying.

It was her talk and tears that induced this mood, for I knew the Shawnees would have overtaken us by this time had they found our trail on the Kentucky shore. Common sense told me that for the remainder of our journey we would, at worst, be compelled to avoid small scouting-parties that had no intimation of our presence on the Big Sandy.

But so many gruesome pranks had been played by Fate that I was growing superstitious. And I feared lest the girl should be snatched from me at the last moment, just as safety was almost within sight. I slept poorly that night and what little rest I did obtain was along toward morning.

THE girl awoke me; and I felt my face burning as I beheld her standing there, staring down accusingly, the hunting-shirt spread across my chest. I sprang to my feet and slipped into the shirt, which was made like a coat and waited for her to speak.

"So you've been sleeping cold," she said.

"Nay. Very warm," I replied, becoming busy with my moccasins.

"After this I will keep awake nights."

"I did not need it. I always take it off at night. It makes me too warm."

"You lie most beautifully, Basdel."

"How is the arm this morning?"

"Much better. But you must be more honest with me. You must not lie any more."

"You're making a mountain out of a hunting-shirt. It is too warm to wear at night in this mild weather."

"You're hopeless. Of course it is not too warm in the warm sunshine."

I was glad to let it go at that. And there was no warm sunshine this morning. The heavens were overcast with gray cold clouds that rode high and brought wind rather than rain. We missed the sun. Town-dwellers can never know the degree of dependence the forest wanderer places on the sunlight for his comfort and good cheer. Despair becomes gaiety under the genial rays. It is not surprizing the sun should be the greatest of all mysteries to the Indians, and therefore their greatest medicine or god.

We ate of the venison and mush and started for the river. The distance was not great, but the way was very rough, and there were no more blazed trees to guide us, the surveyors' trace passing below us and closer to the shore. But I was familiar with the lay of the land and it was impossible for me to go far wrong so long as all streams flowed into the Ohio and were crossed at right angles with their general course.

I carried the kettle slung on my rifle and with my right hand gave the girl aid when the path became unusually difficult. A wrenched ankle would leave us as helpless as a broken leg. It required three hours of painful efforts to bring us to the Sandy.

I found a fording and carried her across to the east shore and soon located a trader's trace. She never dreamed that her father often had traveled along this faint path in his visits to the Ohio Indians. Now that the footing was easier she had time to gaze about, and the aspect depressed her.

The immense hills of sandrock were worn into deep and gloomy ravines by the streams. In the walls of the ravines black holes gaped, for caves were almost as numerous as springs. To encourage a lighter mood I explained that these very caves made the country an ideal place for hiding from the Indians.

She broke into my talk by moaning:

"May the good God help us! See that!"

She was pointing to a dark opening across the river. This framed the face of the devil. For a moment I was sadly startled, then laughed hysterically in relief.

"It's a bear, with a white or gray marking on his face," I explained. "He is harmless. See! He's finished looking us over and goes back into his den."

But the effect of the shock to her nerves did not wear off for some time. To prepare her against more glimpses of bruin I told her how the broken nature of the country made it a favorite region for bears, and that it had been long known along the border as a famous hunting-ground for the big creatures.

"I feel just as if it was the guardian spirit of an evil place, that it is spying on us and plotting to harm us," she confessed.

Whenever the trace permitted I swung aside from the river and took to the ridges. The tops of these were covered with chestnuts and their sides with oaks. More than once on such détours I sighted furtive furry forms slipping away from their feast on the fallen nuts, but Patricia's gaze was not sufficiently trained to detect them; and she wandered through the groves without knowing we were literally surrounded by bears.

While a wild country, it was relieved by many beautiful touches. Such were the tulip-trees, or yellow poplar. Many of them towered a hundred feet with scarcely a limb to mar the wand-like symmetry of the six-foot boles. Scarcely less inspiring were the cucumber-trees, or mountain magnolias, which here reached the perfection of growth.

Scattered among these tall ones were white and yellow oaks; and they would be considered giants if standing alone. These were the serene gods of the forest, and they had a quieting influence on my companion. It was with regret that I led her back along the rough shore of the river.

I shot a young bear, but Patricia displayed a foolish repugnance and would eat none of it. Later in the day I killed a deer with such a minute charge of powder as to emphatically establish my excellence as a marksman for that one shot at least. We were nearly three days in making the Tug Fork of the Sandy.

THE girl bore the hardships well. The wound on her arm healed rapidly, and whatever she actually suffered was mental rather than physical. Our kettle proved second only to my rifle in importance, and if the fare lacked the savor of salt our appetites made up for the deficit. When we reached the Tug we were in the region celebrated for Colonel Andrew Lewis' "Sandy Creek Voyage of Fifty-six," as it was styled with grim facetiousness.

It was one instance when Colonel Lewis failed of carrying out an enterprise against the Indians. It was a retaliatory raid against the Shawnees and his force was composed of whites and Cherokees; and his lack of success was due largely to the inefficiency of the guides who undertook to pilot him to the mouth of the Sandy. I told the girl of the expedition as it was lacking in horrible details, and with other carefully selected narratives tried to keep her from brooding.

She seldom mentioned her father, and when she did it was usually connected with some phase of life over the mountains. I believe that she was so thankful to know he escaped the torture that his death lost much of poignancy. Only once did she revert to his taking off, and then to ask—

"Was there a single chance for him to escape?" And I emphatically declared he never had the ghost of a chance from the moment he fell into Black Hoof's hands.

Another ruse to keep her mind engaged was to trace out our course with a stick on a patch of bare earth. I showed how we should travel to the north fork of the Sandy and then strike to the head of Bluestone, and follow it nearly to the mouth before leaving it to cross New River; then a short journey to the Greenbriar and Howard's Creek.

Had I had any choice I should have preferred to take her over the mountains to Salem, but my time was not my own and it was imperative that I leave her at the first place of safety and be about Governor Dunmore's business. My decision to make Howard's Creek was strengthened by an adventure which befell us near the end of our first day on the Tug. We were casting about for a place to camp when we came upon five Indians, three squaws and two hunters.

Patricia was greatly frightened on beholding them, and it was some time before I could make her understand that they were friendly Delawares, accompanied by their women, and not painted nor equipped for war. After calming her I addressed them and learned they were from White Eye's village. They were afraid to go near the settlements.

Many "Long Knives," as they called the Virginia militia, were flocking to the Great Levels of the Greenbriar, and a forward movement of a whole army was shortly to be expected. As the presence of a large force of our riflemen so near Howard's Creek would insure the safety of that settlement I knew it to be the proper ending of our journey.

I induced Patricia to remain in camp with the Indians while I went out and shot a bear. The bear was very fat and I gave all the meat to the natives, for which they were very grateful. One of them had a smooth-bore, but no powder. I could spare him none.

Patricia was now convinced the Indians would not harm us, but she would not consent to making camp near them. We walked several more miles before she was willing to stop and cook the kettle.

MY TALLY-STICK gave the thirteenth of September as the date of our arrival at Howard's Creek. The settlers informed me I had lost a day somewhere on the long journey and that it was the fourteenth. Nearly all the young and unmarried men were off to fight in Colonel Lewis' army, and many of the heads of families, including Davis and Moulton.

Those who were left behind gave us a royal welcome. Uncle Dick, the aged one, fell to sharpening his long knife with renewed vigor. Patricia and I had been counted as dead. Dale's death had been reported by young Cousin, and it caused no great amount of sorrow. The girl was never allowed to suspect this indifference. In reply to my eager inquiries I was told that Shelby Cousin was at the Great Levels, serving as a scout.

For once Howard's Creek felt safe. With nothing to worry about the men and women became garrulous as crows. The children played "Lewis' Army" from sunrise to sunset. The Widow McCabe swore she would put on a hunting-shirt and breeches and go to war. The passing of men between the levels and the creek resulted in some news and many rumors. The meeting-place at the levels was called Camp Union. Colonel Lewis, pursuant to orders from Governor Dunmore, had commenced assembling the Augusta, Botetourt and Fincastle County troops at the levels on August twenty-seven. Cornstalk's spies had served him well!

His lordship was to lead an army, raised from the northwest counties and from the vicinity of Fort Pitt, down the Ohio and unite with Colonel Lewis at the mouth of the Great Kanawha. Colonel Charles Lewis, with some Augusta and Botetourt troops, had left Camp Union on September sixth to drive the cattle and four hundred pack-animals to the mouth of the Elk, where he was to make canoes for transporting provisions to the Ohio.

The main army had marched from Camp Union on the twelfth, although Colonel Lewis had received a letter from Dunmore, urging that the rendezvous be changed to the mouth of the Little Kanawha. Colonel Lewis had replied it was impossible to alter his line of march.

From a fellow sent out to round up stray bullocks I learned the army would avoid the deep gorge and falls in the river by marching ten miles inland and parallel to the east bank, joining Colonel Charles Lewis at the Elk.

By another man I was told how the militiamen were given to shooting away their precious ammunition, and how the colonel had warned that unless the practise ceased no more powder would be given out. That the Indians were active and not afraid of the troops was evidenced by an attack on Stewart's Fort, only four miles from Camp Union. And this, before the troops marched.

Colonel William Christian was in command of the rear-guard, and his men were much disgruntled at the thought of not being in the forefront of the fighting. What was most significant to me, although only an incident in the estimation of the men left at Howard's Creek, was the attack made by two Indians on two of Lewis' scouts, Clay and Coward by name.

The scouts had separated and one of the Indians fired on and killed Clay. Thinking him to be alone, the Indians ran to get his scalp, and Coward at a distance of a hundred yards shot him dead. Coward then ran back toward the line of march and the surviving Indian fled down the Great Kanawha to inform the Shawnee towns that the Long Knives were coming.

I lost no time in securing a horse and a supply of powder and in hurrying to say good-by to Patricia. She was very sober when I told her I was off to overtake the army. Placing both hands on my shoulders, she said:

"Basdel, I know you've forgiven all the disagreeable things I've said to you. I will wait here until I hear from you. I will pray that you have an equal chance with the other brave men."

"I will come back and take you over the mountains."

"If you will only come back you may take me where you will, dear lad, even if it be deeper into the wilderness," she softly promised.

And Mrs. Davis bustled out of the cabin and energetically shooed the curious youngsters away.

And now I was riding away to battle, riding right joyously over the chestnut ridges and through the thick laurel, through stretches of pawpaw, beech and flowering poplar, with the pea-vine and buffalo grass soft underfoot. And my heart was as blithe as the mocking-bird's and there was no shadow of tomahawk or scalping-knife across my path.

I knew the destiny of the border was soon to be settled, that it hinged on the lean, leather-faced riflemen ahead, but there was nothing but sunshine and glory for me in that September day as I hastened to overtake the grim-faced man who believed his lordship, John Murray, fourth Earl of Dunmore, Viscount Fincastle, Baron of Blair, Monlin and of Tillimet was Virginia's last royal governor.

CHAPTER XII

THE SHADOWS VANISH

I FOLLOWED the river, the cord of the bow, and made good time where the army would have had difficulty to get through. A dozen miles below the falls and near the mouth of Kelly's Creek, where Walter Kelly was killed by the Indians early in August, I came upon a scout named Nooney. We were on the west bank and the river was two hundred yards wide at that point. Nooney begged some tobacco and pointed out a fording-place and gave me the "parole." This, very fittingly was "Kanawha." He said I would speedily make the camp and that Colonel Lewis was with the first troops.

I lost no time in crossing and had barely cleared the river-bank before I was held up by an outpost. This fellow knew nothing of military red-tape. He was plain militia, a good man in a fight, but inclined to resent discipline. He grinned affably as I broke through the woods and lowered his rifle.

"Gim'me some tobacker," he demanded good-naturedly

"I supposed you'd want the parole," I replied, fishing out a twist of Virginia leaf.

"——! I got that. It's 'Kanawha.' What I want is tobacker. Don't hurry. Le's talk. I'm lonesome as one bug all alone in a buffler robe. See any footin' over 'cross? I'm gittin' tired o' this outpost business. All foolishness. We'll know when we strike th' red devils. No need o' havin' some one tell us. Your hoss looks sorter peaked. S'pose we'll have a mess of a fight soon? We boys come along to fight, not to stand like stockade-timbers out here all alone."

I told him I had important news for Colonel Lewis and must not tarry. He took it rather ill because I would not tell him my news, then tried to make me promise I would come back and impart it. I equivocated and led my horse on toward the camp, concealed from view of the river-bank by a ribbon of woods. The first man I met was Davis, and the honest fellow was so rejoiced to see me that he dropped his gun and took both my hands and stood there with his mouth working, but unable to say a word. Big tears streamed down his face.

I hurriedly related my adventures, and his joy was trebled when he heard that Patricia was safe at Howard's Creek.

"Shelby Cousin shot and kilt Dale. He told us 'bout that. Ericus thought he knew it all. Wal, them that lives longest larns th' most," he philosophically observed. "Powerful glad to see you. We'll be seein' more of each other, I take it. How's my woman? Good. She's a right forward, capable woman, if I do say it. Moulton's out on a scout. Silent sort of a cuss these days from thinkin' 'bout his woman an' th' children. But a rare hand in a mess."

"And Cousin?"

"Say, Morris, that feller acts like he was reg'lar happy. Laughs a lot, only it don't sound nat'ral. He's a hellion at scoutin'. Poor Baby Kirst! I must 'low it's best for him to be wiped out, but it's too bad he couldn't 'a' made his last fight along with us. There's th' colonel in his shirt sleeves smokin' his pipe."

I passed on to where Lewis was sitting on a log. It was fearfully hot, as the high hills on each side of the river shut out the free air and made the camp an oven. On recognizing me, the colonel's eyes flickered with surprize, as the report of my capture had spread far. He rose and took my hand and quietly said:

"I knew they couldn't hold you unless they killed you on the spot. What about Miss Dale?"

I informed him of her safety and his face lighted wonderfully.

"That's good!" he softly exclaimed. "A beautiful young woman, the kind that Virginia is always proud of. Ericus Dale was lucky to die without being tortured. Now for your news; for you must be bringing some."

I told him of the mighty gathering at Chillicothe and of the influx of the fierce Ottawas. Lost sister's warning to me to keep clear of the Great Kanawha impressed him deeply. It convinced him, I think, that the astute Cornstalk had planned to attack the army before it could cross the Ohio, and that the Shawnees on learning of the assembling at the levels knew the advance must be down the Kanawha. The Indian who escaped after Clay was killed was back on the Scioto by this time. After musing over it for a bit he insisted that it did not necessarily follow the attack would be in force.

"That was Cornstalk's first plan. But now he knows Governor Dunmore has an army at the mouth of the Little Kanawha. He may chose to attack him instead of me. I hope not, but there's a strong chance he'll do that while making a feint to fool me, and then float down the river and give me a real battle."

He kindly offered to attach me to one of the companies as sergeant, with the possibility of appointing me an ensign, but I preferred to act as scout and enjoy more independence of action.

"That's the —— of it," he remarked. "All these fellows want to be scouts and range the woods free of discipline. They want to whip the Indians but they want to do it their own way. They persist in wasting ammunition, and it now looks as if we would go into battle with less than one-fourth of a pound of powder per man.

"If any man speaks up and says he is the best marksman in Virginia then every man within hearing challenges him to prove it. And they'll step one side and have a shooting-match, even if they know Cornstalk's army is within a couple of miles of us. They're used to bear and deer-meat. They don't want to eat bullock-meat. I'll admit the beef is a bit tough. And every morning some of then break the rules by stealing out early to kill game. This not only wastes powder, but it keeps the outposts alarmed."

Before I was dismissed I asked about Cousin. The colonel's face became animated.

"Oh, the young man with the sad history? He's out on a scout. That fellow is absolutely fearless. I am surprized every time he lives to return to make a report. It's useless to lay down a route for him to scout; he prowls where he will. But he's valuable, and we let him have his own way."

On the next day we marched to the mouth of the Elk where Colonel Charles Lewis was completing arrangements for transporting the supplies down the river. While at that camp I went on my first scout and found Indian tracks. One set of them measured fourteen inches in length. The men went and looked at the signs before they would accept my measurements.

The camp was extremely busy, for we all knew the crisis was drawing close. Our armorer worked early and late unbreeching the guns having wet charges. Three brigades of horses were sent back to Camp Union for more flour. I went with Mooney on a scout up Coal River and we found Indian signs four miles from the camp. Other scouts were sent down the Kanawha and up the Elk.

On returning, I found Cousin impatiently waiting for me to come in. He had changed and his bearing puzzled me. He was given to laughing loudly at the horse-play of the men, yet his eyes never laughed. I took him outside the camp and without any circumlocution related the facts concerning his sister and Kirst.

"Tell me again that part 'bout how she died," he quietly requested when I had finished. I did so. He commented:

"For killing that redskin I owe you more'n I would if you'd saved my life a thousand times. So little sister is dead. No, not that. Now that woman is dead I have my little sister back again. I took on with this army so's I could reach the Scioto towns. To think that Kirst got way up there! I 'low he had a man's fight to die in. That's the way. Morris, I'm obleeged to you. I'll always remember her words 'bout sendin' a little sister to me. Now I've got two of 'em. We won't talk no more 'bout it."

With that he turned and hurried into the woods.

THE men continued firing their guns without having obtained permission, and Colonel Lewis was thoroughly aroused to stop the practise. He directed that his orders of the fifteenth be read at the head of each company, with orders for the captains to inspect their men's stock of ammunition and report those lacking powder. This reduced the waste, but there was no stopping the riflemen from popping away at bear or deer once they were out of sight of their officers.

I had hoped Cousin would return and be my companion on the next scout, but as he failed to show up I set off with Mooney for a second trip up the Coal. This time we discovered signs of fifteen Indians making toward the Kanawha below the camp. We returned with the news and found a wave of drunkenness had swept the camp during our absence.

The sutlers were ordered to bring no more liquor into camp, and to sell from the supply on hand only on a captain's written order. This served to sober the offenders speedily. The scouts sent down the Kanawha returned and reported two fires and five Indians within fifteen miles of the Ohio. It was plain that the Indians were dogging our steps day and night, and the men were warned not to straggle.

We were at the Elk Camp from the twenty-fourth to the thirtieth, and on the latter date the canoemen loaded their craft, and the pack-horse men and bullock-drivers drew two days' rations and started down-river. It rained for three days and on October second we were camped near the mouth of the Coal. It was there that Cousin appeared, a Mingo scalp hanging at his belt. He informed Colonel Lewis he had been to the mouth of the river, making the down-trip in a canoe, and that as yet no Indians had crossed except small bands of scouts.

Breaking camp, we encountered rich bottom-lands, difficult to traverse because of the rain. Every mile or two there were muddy creeks, and the pack-horses were nearly worn out. Several desertions were now reported from the troops, a hostility to discipline rather than cowardice being the incentive. Another trouble was the theft of supplies.

As we advanced down the river signs of small bands of Indians became numerous; scarcely a scout returned without reporting some. I saw nothing of Cousin until the sixth of October, and as we were finishing an eight-mile march through long defiles and across small runs and were entering the bottom which extends for four miles to the Ohio. The first that I knew he was with us when he walked at my side and greeted—

"There's goin' to be a screamin' big fight."

He offered no explanation of his absence and I asked him nothing. It had required five weeks to march eleven hundred men one hundred and sixty miles and to convey the necessary supplies the same distance.

As we scouts in the lead entered the bottom Cousin called my attention to the high-water marks on the trees. Some of these measured ten feet. The Point itself is high. From it we had a wide view of the Ohio and Kanawha, up and down-stream. It was Cousin who discovered a writing made fast to a tree, calling attention to a paper concealed in the hollow at the base of the tree. We fished it out and found it was addressed to Colonel Lewis. Cousin and I took it to him. Before opening it, he gave Cousin a shrewd glance and remarked:

"I am glad to see you back, young man."

"If I've read the signs right I 'low I'm glad to git back," was the grave reply.

The letter was from Governor Dunmore, and he wrote to complain because our colonel had not joined him at the Little Kanawha. He now informed our commander he had dropped down to the mouth of the Big Hockhocking, and we were expected to join him there. After frowning over the communication, Colonel Lewis read it aloud to some of his officers and expressed himself very forcefully. It was soon camp gossip, and every man was free to discuss it.

Much anger was expressed against Governor Dunmore. And it did seem absurd to ask our army to move up the Ohio some sixty miles when such a tedious maneuver would leave us farther from the Indian towns than we were while at the Point. Had the order been given for the army to go to the Hockhocking there would have been many desertions.

I learned later that the letter was brought to the Point by Simon Kenton and Simon Girty, who with Michael Cresap were serving as scouts with Dunmore. While the camp was busily criticizing the governor our scouts from the Elk came in and reported seeing Indians hunting buffalo. When within six miles of the Point they found a plowshare, some surveying-instruments, a shirt, a light blue coat and a human under jaw-bone.

Shelby Cousin said the dead man was Thomas Hogg, who with two or three of his men were reported killed by the Indians in the preceding April while making improvements. Cousin insisted his death had been due to wild animals or an accident, after which the animals had dragged his remains into the woods. He argued that an Indian would never have left the coat or the instruments.

We passed the seventh and eighth of the month in making the camp sanitary and in building a shelter for the supplies yet to arrive down the river. Preparations also went ahead for moving the army across the Ohio. Most of the scouts were sent out to hunt up lost beeves, while a sergeant and squad were dispatched with canoes to the Elk after flour.

Three men came in from the Elk and reported that Colonel Christian was camped there with two hundred and twenty men, that he had only sixteen kettles, and was fearing his men would be ill from eating too much roast meat "without broth." On the eighth there arrived more letters from Governor Dunmore, in which his lordship expressed his surprize and annoyance because of our failure to appear at the Hockhocking.

This time Colonel Lewis was quite open in expressing his disgust at the governor's lack of strategy. The Kanawha was the gate to Augusta, Botetourt and Fincastle Counties. To leave it and move up-river would leave the way open for the red army to stream into Virginia and work its savagery while the colonials were cooped up on the Ohio or hunting Indian wigwams in the wilderness.

In the package was a letter to our colonel from Colonel Adam Stephens, second in command to his Excellency, which was given wide publicity. Colonel Stephens reported very disagreeable news from Boston. It was to the effect that General Gage had fired on the people at Cambridge. Later we learned that while some gunpowder and two cannon had been seized by his Majesty's troops there had been no massacre of the provincials. But while the rumor remained uncontradicted it caused high excitement and great rage.

ON THE evening of the ninth Cousin and I were ordered out to scout up the river beyond Old Town Creek. Our camp was near the junction of the Kanawha and the Ohio, almost at the tip of the Point. About a fourth of a mile to the east is Crooked Creek, a very narrow stream at that season of the year, with banks steep and muddy. It skirts the base of some low hills and flows nearly south in emptying into the Kanawha. Half-way between our camp and Old Town Creek, which empties into the Ohio, is a small stretch of marsh-land extending north and south, with high bottom-lands on each side.

Cousin and I planned to keep along the Ohio shore until a few miles above Old Town Creek, when we would separate, one returning along our course to keep an eye on the river, the other circling to the east and swinging back through the low hills drained by Crooked Creek. This double reconnaissance should reveal any spies.

The men were very anxious to cross the river and come in contact with the Indians. They believed they would have the allied tribes within their grasp once they reached the Scioto. They were cheered by the report that the army would cross on the morrow. One tall Watauga boy boastfully proclaimed that all the Shawnees and Mingos beyond the Ohio wouldn't "make more'n a breakfast for us." Davis, because a man of family and more conservative, insisted it would be a "pretty tough chunk of a fight."

This was the optimistic spirit Cousin and I left behind us when we set out at sunset. Cousin was in a new mood. There was a certain wild gaiety, rather a ferocious gaiety, in his bearing. His drawn face had lost some of the hard lines and looked almost boyish and his eyes were feverishly alight. He seemed possessed of superabundant physical strength, and in pure muscular wantonness went out of his way to leap the fallen timbers which littered the shore.

As darkness increased he ceased his wild play and became the prince of scouts. We advanced most leisurely, for we had all night if we cared to stay out. We halted when abreast of the marsh-land and seated ourselves on the banks of the Ohio and watched the starlight find a mirror in the waters. After a protracted silence he abruptly asked—

"My sister said she was sendin' me a new sister, you say?"

"Those were her words."

"I wish she could know tonight I ain't needin' any new sister. Wish she could know right now that she's always been my sister. When I reckoned I'd lost her I was just mistook. She was just gone away for a little while. She found a mighty hard an' rough trace to travel, I 'low. I 'low the Almighty will have to give her many belts afore He smooths out the path in her mind. I 'low it'll take a heap o' presents to make up for the burrs an' briars an' sharp stones she had to foot it over. Thank God she died *white!*"

"Amen to that!"

After another silence he asked—

"You 'low she's with daddy an' mammy?"

"I do."

"That's mighty comfortin' to figger on," he slowly mused. "Much like a younker gittin' mighty tired an' goin' back home to rest. Daddy an' mammy will do a heap to make it up to her for what she had to go through. Yes, I can count on 'em, even if the Almighty happened to be too busy to notice her when she first crossed the border."

Dear lad! He meant no irreverence.

The night was calm and sounds carried easily. We had passed beyond where we could hear the men singing and merry-making in camp, but the uneasy movements of a turkey and the stealthy retreat of a deer seemed very close at hand. The soft *pad-pad* of a woods cat approached within a few feet before the creature caught the scent, and the retreat was marked by a series of crashings through the undergrowth.

After a while we rose and continued up the river.

"No Injuns along here," murmured Cousin.

We reached Old Town Creek and crossed it without discovering any signs of the enemy; nor were we looking for anything more serious than a stray scout or two. We went nearly two miles above the creek and turned back after deciding we would separate at the creek, he taking the hills route and I following the river. We reached the creek and he was about to leave me when we both heard a new note, a splashing noise, very faint. Our hands met in a mutual desire to grab an arm and enforce attention.

"No fish made it," I whispered.

"No fish," he agreed. "There!"

The splashing came from across the several hundred yards of the Ohio's deep and silent current. It was repeated until it became almost continuous, and it gradually grew louder.

"Rafts!" shrilly whispered Cousin.

"They are paddling fast."

"No! But there are many rafts," he corrected.

We retreated up-stream a short distance and concealed ourselves in a deep growth. To the sound of poles and paddles was added the murmuring of guttural voices. Then for a climax a raft struck against the bank and a low voice speaking Shawnee gave some sharp orders.

"One!" counted Cousin.

As he spoke another raft took the shore, and then they grounded so rapidly that it was impossible to count them. Orders were given, and the Indians worked back from the river and proceeded to make a night-camp. The landing had been made at the mouth of the creek, but the savages had spread out, and some of them were due east from us.

"There's a heap of 'em!" whispered Cousin. "Lucky for us they didn't fetch any dawgs along, or we'd be smelled out an' have to leg it."

"I hear squaws talking."

"Kiss the devil if you don't! There's boys' voices, too. They've fetched their squaws an' boys along to knock the wounded an' dyin' in the head."

"Then that means they feel sure of winning."

And my heart began thumping until I feared its beating would be audible at a distance. And before my inner gaze appeared a picture of Lewis' army defeated and many victims being given over to the stake.

"Keep shet!" cautioned Cousin. "There it is again! A Mingo talkin', a Seneca, I'd say—Hear that jabber! Delaware—Wyandot—Taway (Ottawa). With a blanket o' Shawnee pow-wow. By Heavens, Morris! This is Cornstalk's whole force! They've larned that Dunmore is at the Hockhockin' an' will be j'inin' up with Lewis any day, an' old Cornstalk thinks to lick Lewis afore Dunmore's men can git along!"

IT WAS now after midnight, and I knew we should be back at camp and warning Colonel Lewis of his peril. I knew from my last talk with him that he did not expect to meet the Indians in any numbers until we had crossed the Ohio. Our failure to find any Indians at the Point and our prospects for an immediate crossing conduced to this belief.

The day before all the scouts had been instructed as to our maneuvers once we crossed the river and were searching for ambushes. It was terrible to think of our army asleep only three miles away. I urged an immediate return, but Cousin coolly refused to go until he had reconnoitered further.

"You stay here till I've sneaked down to the mouth o' the creek," he whispered.

" 'Twon't do for both of us to git killed an' leave no one to take the word to Lewis."

"But why run any risk?" I anxiously demanded; for I feared he had some mad prank in mind which would betray our presence and perhaps stop our warning to the army.

"We must larn somethin' as to how many o' the red skunks there be," he replied.

"To venture near their camp will mean discovery. They're very wide-awake."

"I ain't goin' near their camp," he growled in irritation. "I want to look over them rafts. I can tell from them how many warriors come over, or pretty close to it."

He slipped away and left me to do the hardest of the work—the work of waiting. It seemed a very long time before I heard the bushes rustle. I drew my ax, but a voice whispering "Richmond," the parole for the night, composed me. Feeling his way to my side he gravely informed me:

"There's seventy-eight or nine rafts an' a few canoes. It's goin' to be a fine piece o' fightin'. At least there's a thousand warriors on this side an' a lot o' squaws an' boys." I estimated our army at eleven hundred and I thanked God they were all frontiersmen.

Cousin now was as eager to go as I; and leaving our hiding-place, we worked north until we felt safe to make a détour to the east. Our progress was slow as there was no knowing how far the Indian scouts were ranging. Once we were forced to remain flat on our stomachs while a group of warriors passed within a dozen feet of us, driving to their camp some strayed beeves from the high rolling bottom-lands to the east. When the last of them had passed I observed with great alarm a thinning out of the darkness along the eastern sky-line.

"Good God! We'll be too late!" I groaned. "Let's fire our guns and give the alarm!"

"Not yet!" snarled my companion. "I must be in the thick o' that fight. We're too far east to git to camp in a hustle. We must sneak atween the hills an' that small slash (Virginian for marsh). Foller me."

We changed our course so as to avoid the low hills drained by Crooked Creek, and made after the warriors. About an hour before sunrise we were at the head of the marsh, and in time to witness the first act of the day's great drama. Two men were working out of the fallen timber, and Cousin threw up his double-barrel rifle. I checked him, saying—

"Don't! They're white!"

"Renegades!"

"John Sevier's younger brother, Valentine. T'other is Jim Robertson."

"Then Lewis knows. He sent 'em to scout the camp."

"They're after game. James Shelby is sick with the fever. Yesterday morning he asked them to perch a turkey for him. Signal them. They know nothing about the Indians!"

Cousin risked discovery by standing clear of the bushes and waving his hat. "There comes two more of 'em!" he exclaimed.

This couple was some distance behind the Watauga boys, but I recognized them. One was James Mooney, my companion on the Coal River scout. The other was Joseph Hughey.

I jumped out and stood beside Cousin and waved my arms frantically. One of them caught the motion and said something. The four paused and stared at us. We made emphatic gestures for them to fall back. At first they were slow to understand, thinking, as Sevier told me afterward, that I was pointing out some game. Then they turned to run, Robertson and Sevier firing their rifles to the woods to the north of us.

These were the first guns fired in the battle of Point Pleasant. From the woods came the noise of a large body of men advancing. A ripple of shots was sent after the hunters. Hughey and Mooney halted and returned the fire. A streak of red some distance ahead of the Shawnee's position, and close to the river bank, dropped Hughey dead. This shot was fired by Tavenor Ross, a white man, who was captured by the Indians when a boy and who had grown up among them.

Mooney, Robertson and young Sevier were now running for the camp, passing between the Ohio bank and the marsh. We raced after them just as a man named Hickey ran from the bushes and joined them. The Indians kept up a scattering fire and they made much noise as they spread out through the woods in battle-line. They supposed we were the scouts of an advancing army.

It is the only instance I know of where insubordination saved any army from a surprize attack, and possibly from defeat.

To escape detection while breaking the orders against foraging, the five men named had stolen from the camp at an early hour.

By the time Cousin and I passed the lower end of the marsh small bodies of Indians were making for the hills along Crooked Creek; others were following down the Ohio inside the timber, while their scouts raced recklessly after us to locate our line of battle. The scouts soon discovered that our army was nowhere to be seen. Runners were instantly sent back to inform Cornstalk he was missing a golden opportunity by not attacking at once.

Mooney was the first to reach Colonel Lewis, who was seated on a log in his shirt sleeves, smoking his pipe. Mooney shouted—

"More'n four acres covered with Injuns at Old Town Creek!"

Rising, but with no show of haste, Lewis called to Cousin and me—

"What about this?"

"An attack in force, sir, I believe," I panted.

He glanced at Cousin, who nodded and then ducked away.

"I think you are mistaken," the colonel coldly remarked. "It must be a big scouting-party." I tried to tell him what Cousin and I had seen and heard. But he ignored me and ordered the drums to beat To Arms. But already the border men were turning out and diving behind logs and rocks even while the sleep still blurred their eyes.

COLONEL LEWIS ordered two columns of one hundred and fifty men each to march forward and test the strength of the enemy. The colonel's brother Charles led the Augusta line to the right. Colonel William Fleming commanded the left—Botetourt men. The two columns were about two hundred yards apart, and their brisk and businesslike advance did the heart good to behold.

No one as yet except the hunters and Cousin and I realized the three hundred men were being sent against the full force of the Ohio Indians. Colonel Lewis resumed his seat on the log and continued smoking.

"You're nervous, Morris. It can't be more than a large scouting-party, or they'd have chased you in."

"They came over on seventy-eight rafts!" I replied, turning to race after Colonel Charles Lewis' column.

The Augusta men were now swinging in close to Crooked Creek where it skirts the foot of the low hills. As I drew abreast of the head of the column we were fired upon by a large force of Indians, now snugly ensconced behind trees and fallen timber along the creek. We were then not more than a quarter of a mile from camp. The first fire was tremendously heavy and was quickly followed by a second and third volley. The Augusta men reeled, but quickly began returning the fire, the behavior of the men being all that a commander could desire. They were forced to give ground however as the odds were heavy.

On our left crashed a volley as the Botetourt men were fired on. Colonel Lewis ordered his men to take cover, then turned to Captain Benjamin Harrison and cried:

"This is no scouting-party! But my brother will soon be sending reinforcements."

He had hardly spoken before he spun half-way around, a surprized expression on his face.

"I'm wounded," he quietly said.

Then handing his rifle to a soldier, he called out to his men—

"Go on and be brave!"

With that he began walking to the camp. I ran to help him, but he motioned me back, saying—

"Your place is there. I'm all right."

So I left him, a very brave soldier and a Christian gentleman, to make his way alone while his very minutes were numbered.

Half a dozen of our men were down and the rest were slowly giving ground. Up to the time Colonel Lewis left us I had seen very few Indians, and only mere glimpses at that. Now they began showing themselves as they crowded forward through the timber, confident they were to slaughter us. Above the noise of the guns, the yells and shouts of red and white combatants, rose a deep booming voice, that of Cornstalk, and he was shouting:

"Be strong! Be strong! Push them into the river!"

We dragged back our dead and wounded as with a reckless rush the Indians advanced over logs and rocks up to the very muzzles of our guns. But although the Augusta line gave ground the men were not suffering from panic, and the smashing volley poured into the enemy did great damage and checked their mad onslaught.

Never before did red men make such a determined charge. In an instant there were a score of individual combats, backwoodsman and savage, being clinched in a death-struggle with ax and knife. Now our line stiffened, and the very shock of their attack seemed to hurl the Indians back. Still we would have been forced back to the camp and must have suffered cruel losses if not for the timely reinforcements brought up on the run by Colonel John Field, veteran of Braddock's and Pontiac's Wars.

He led Augusta and Botetourt men, for it was no longer possible to keep the two lines under their respective commanders, nor did any captain for the rest of the day command his own company as a unit. With the coming up of Colonel Field the Indians immediately gave ground, then charged most viciously as our men pursued. This maneuver was one of Cornstalk's cunning tactics, the alternate advance and retreat somewhat confusing our men.

The second attack was repulsed and the riflemen slowly gained more ground. The firing on our left was now very heavy and Colonel Field directed me to learn how the fight there was progressing. Some of our fellows were screaming that Fleming's column was being driven in, and our colonel had no intention of being cut off.

As I started toward the river I could hear Cornstalk exhorting:

"Shoot straight! Lie close! Fight and be strong!"

As I withdrew from the right column I had a chance to get a better idea of the battle. The Indians lined the base of the hills bordered by Crooked Creek, and were posted on all the heights to shoot any whites trying to swim either the Ohio or the Kanawha. On the opposite side of the Ohio and, as I later learned on the south bank of the Kanawha, red forces had been stationed in anticipation of our army being routed.

As I neared the Botetourt men I could hear between volleys the Indians shouting in unison—

"Drive the white dogs over!" meaning, across the river.

The Botetourt men were well posted and considerably in advance of the right column, as they had given but little ground while the right was retiring after Lewis was shot. At no time did either column fight at a range of more than twenty yards, and when I crawled among Fleming's men the range was not more than six yards, while here and there in the deeper growth were hand-to-hand struggles.

"A big chunk of a fight!" screamed a shrill voice, and Cousin was beside me, wearing a brilliant scarlet jacket. As he was crawling by me I caught him by the heel and dragged him back.

"You fool! Take that coat off!" I yelled. For the vivid splotch of color made him a tempting target for every Indian gun. And the Shawnees were skilful marksmen even if less rapid than the whites because of their inability to clean their fouled weapons.

Cousin drew up his leg to kick free, then smiled sweetly and said:

"It's my big day, Morris. Don't go for to meddle with my medicine. Everything's all right at last. I've found the long trace that leads to my little sister. She's waitin' to put her hand in mine, as she used to do on Keeney's Knob."

With that he suddenly jerked his leg free and sprang to his feet and streaked toward the savages, his blood-curdling panther-screech penetrating the heavier vibrations of the battle.

He was lost to view in the brush and I had my work to do. I kept along the edge of the timber, and answered many anxious queries as to the fate of the right column. I reassured them, but did not deem it wise to tell of Colonel Lewis' wound. I found the column quite close to the river and by the stubborn resistance it was meeting I knew the Indians were strongly posted.

"Why don't you whistle now?" they kept howling in concert, and referring to our fifes which were still.

"We'll kill you all, and then go and speak to your big chief, (Dunmore)," was one of their promises.

And there were other things shouted, foul epithets, which I am ashamed to admit could only have been learned from the whites. And repeatedly did they encourage each other and seek to intimidate us by yelling:

"Drive the white dogs over the river! Drive them like cattle into the water!"

WHILE I kept well covered and was completing my reconnaissance I was horrified to see Colonel Fleming walk into the clear ground. He fired at an Indian who had showed himself for a moment to make an insulting gesture. He got his man, and the next second was struck by three balls, two passing through his left arm and the third penetrating his left breast.

He called out to his captains by name and sharply ordered them to hold their ground while he went to the rear to be patched up. He was answered by hearty cheers, but his absence was to be keenly felt by his officers. He started to work his way to the Point, but the exertion of bending and dodging from tree to stump sorely taxed him. I ran to his aid just as Davis, of Howard's Creek, sprang from behind a log and seized his right arm. Between us we soon had him back in camp and his shirt off. The lung tissue had been forced through the wound a finger's length. He asked me to put it back. I attempted it and failed, whereat he did it himself without any fuss.

On returning to the right column to make a belated report to Colonel Field I ran across the body of Mooney, my partner on several scouts. He had been shot through the head. It may here be said that nearly all the dead on both sides were shot through the head or chest, indicating the accuracy of marksmanship on both sides.

I found the Augusta men steadily pushing the Indians back. But when they gave ground quickly, as if in a panic, it was to tempt the foolhardy into rushing forward. The riflemen had learned their lesson, however, and maintained their alignment. The advance was through nettles and briers, up steep muddy banks and over fallen timber.

The warriors rushed repeatedly to the very muzzles of our guns, and thus displayed a brand of courage never surpassed, if ever equaled, by the North American Indian before. It was Cornstalk who was holding them to the bloody work. His voice at times sounded very close, but although we all knew his death would count a greater coup than the scalps of a hundred braves we never could get him. He was too shrewd and evasive.

Once I believed I had him, for I had located him behind a detached mound of fallen timber. He was loudly calling out for his men to be brave and to lie close, when a warrior leaped up and started to run to the rear. Then Cornstalk flashed into view long enough to sink his ax into the coward's head. It was all done so quickly that he dropped to cover unharmed.

That was one of his ways of enforcing obedience, a mode of terrorization never before practised by a war-chief to my knowledge. It was told afterward by the Shawnees that he killed more than that weak-hearted one during the long day. I saw nothing of the other chiefs who attended the conference in Cornstalk's Town while I was a prisoner. And yet they were there, chiefs of Mingos, Wyandots, Delawares and Ottawas.

"They're fallin' back! They're fallin' back!" yelled a voice in advance of our first line.

And the scream of a panther told us it was Cousin. He had worked across from the left column, and we were soon beholding his bright jacket in a tangle of logs and stumps.

The men advanced more rapidly, but did not break their line; and it was evident the savages were giving ground in earnest. Our men renewed their cheering and their lusty shouts were answered by the column on the river-bank, still in advance of us.

As it seemed we were about to rush the enemy into a panic we received our second heavy loss of the day. Colonel Field was shot dead. He was standing behind a big tree, reserving his fire for an Indian who had been shouting filthy abuse at him. Poor colonel! It was but a ruse to hold his attention while savages up the slope and behind fallen timber drew a bead on him. Captain Evan Shelby assumed command and ordered the men to keep up the advance.

The Indians gave ground, but with no signs of confusion. Observing our left column was in advance of the right, Cornstalk was attempting to straighten his line by pulling in his left. As we pressed on we discovered the savages were scalping their own dead to prevent their hair falling into our hands. From the rear of the red men came the sound of many tomahawks. Cousin, who for a moment found himself at my side, exulted:

"Curse 'em! Their squaws an' boys are cuttin' saplin's for to carry off their wounded! They'll need a heap o' stretchers afore this day is over!"

The sun was now noon-high and the heat was beastly. The battle was at its climax. The left column was near a little pond and about fifty yards from the river, or a fourth of a mile beyond the spot where Lewis was shot. We had evened up this lead, and the battle-line extended from the river and pond to Crooked Creek and half-way down the creek, running from west to east and then southwest.

Cornstalk's plan was to coop us up in the Point and drive us into the Kanawha and Ohio. There were times when our whole line gave ground, but only to surge ahead again. Thus we seesawed back and forth along a mile and a quarter of battle-line, with the firing equal in intensity from wing to wing. Nor had the Indians lost any of their high spirits. Their retreat was merely a maneuver. They kept shouting—

"We'll show you how to shoot!"

"Why don't you come along?"

"Why don't you whistle now?"

"You'll have two thousand to fight tomorrow!"

But the force that held them together and impelled them to make the greatest fight the American Indian ever put up, not even excepting the battle of Bushy Run, was Cornstalk. Truly he was a great man, measured even by the white man's standards!

"Be strong! Be brave! Lie close! Shoot well!" flowed almost uninterruptedly from his lips.

Davis, of Howard's Creek, went by me, making for the rear with a shattered right arm and a ghastly hole through his cheek. He tried to grin on recognizing me. Word was passed on from our rear that runners had been sent to hurry up Colonel Christian and his two hundred men. Among the captains killed by this time were John Murray and Samuel Wilson. It was a few minutes after the noon hour that Cousin emerged from the smoke on my right and howled—

"There's old Puck-i-shin-wa!"

He darted forward, clearing all obstacles with the ease of a deer. I saw the Shawnee chief, father of Tecumseh, snap his piece at the boy. Then I saw him go down with Cousin's lead through his painted head. Two savages sprang up and Cousin killed one with his remaining barrel. The other fired pointblank, and by the way Cousin fell I knew his object in wearing the scarlet jacket was attained. He had wished to die this day in the midst of battle.

William White killed Cousin's slayer. The boy was in advance of the line and his coat made him conspicuous. Doubtless the savages believed him to be an important officer because of it.

Five of them rushed in to secure his scalp, and each fell dead, and their bodies concealed the boy from view. Up to one o'clock the fighting raged with undiminished fury, with never any cessation of their taunts and epithets and Cornstalk's stentorian encouragement.

Now it is never in Indian nature to prolong a conflict once it is obvious they must suffer heavy losses. They consider it the better wisdom to run away and await an opportunity when the advantage will be with them. Cornstalk had been confident that his early morning attack would drive us into the rivers, thus affording his forces on the opposite banks much sport in picking us off.

But so fiercely contested had been the battle that none of our dead had been scalped except Hughey and two or three men who fell at the first fire. By all that we had learned of Indian nature they should now, after six hours of continuous fighting, be eager to withdraw. They had fought the most bitterly contested battle ever participated in by their race.

Nor had they, as in Braddock's defeat, been aided by white men. There were, to be true, several white men among them, such as Tavenor Ross, John Ward and George Collet; but these counted no more than ordinary warriors and Collet was killed before the fighting was half over. According to all precedents the battle should have ended in an Indian rout by the time the sun crossed the meridian. Instead the savages stiffened their resistance and held their line.

Our men cheered from parched throats when word was passed that Collet's body had been found and identified. Poor devil! Perhaps it opened the long trace to him, where everything would be made right. He was captured when a child and had responded to the only environment he had ever known.

The case of such as Collet—yes, and of John Ward and Ross—is entirely different from that of Timothy Dorman, and others of his kind, who was captured when a grown man and who turned renegade to revenge himself for wrongs, real or fancied, on his old neighbors.

IT WAS not until after seven hours of fighting that we detected any falling off in the enemy's resistance. Even then the savages had the advantage of an excellent position, and to press them was extremely hazardous business. We continued to crowd them, however, until they were lined up on a long ridge which extended from the small marsh where Cousin and I first saw Robertson and Sevier, for half a mile to the east, where it was cut by the narrow bed of Crooked Creek.

None of us needed to be told that so long as the enemy held this ridge our camp at the Point was in grave danger. From the riflemen along the Ohio word came that the Indians were throwing their dead into the river, while squaws and boys were dragging back their wounded.

This had a heartening effect on us, for it indicated a doubt was creeping into the minds of the savages. Once they permitted the possibility of defeat to possess them their effectiveness would decrease. Company commanders called on their men to take the ridge, but to keep their line intact.

With wild cheers the men responded and buckled down to the grueling task. Every patch of fallen timber proved to be an Indian fort, where the bravest of the tribes fought until they were killed. It was stubborn traveling, but our riflemen were not to be denied.

From along the line would come cries of:

"Remember Tygart's Valley!"

"Remember Carr's Creek!"

"Remember the Clendennins!"

And always Cornstalk's voice answered:

"Be strong! Be brave! Fight hard!"

So we struggled up the slope, gaining a yard at a time and counting it a triumph if we passed a pile of dead timber and gained another a few feet beyond.

When we were most encouraged the Indians began mocking us and shouting exultingly and informing us that the warriors across the Kanawha and Ohio had attacked our camp and were massacring the small force retained there. This statement, repeatedly hurled at us with every semblance of savage gloating, tended to weaken the men's one purpose. We could capture the ridge—but! Behind our determination crawled the fear that we might be assailed in the rear at any moment.

Captain Shelby was quick to realize the depressing influence of this kind of talk, and shouted for the word to be passed that it was an Indian trick, that our troops were guarding the Kanawha for half a mile up the stream and that the warriors on the Indian shore could not cross over without the column on our left discovering the move.

This prompted our common sense to return to us, and we remembered that Andrew Lewis was too cool and shrewd to be caught napping. The Point was sprinkled with huge trees and it would take a big force to clear it of our reserves; and the bulk of the enemy was before us on the ridge.

With renewed vigor we made greater exertions and at last reached the top of the ridge and cleared it. But even then the Indians were not defeated. They charged us with ferocious energy time after time, and the best we could do was to cling to our position and let them bring the fighting to us. So different was their behavior from any we had been familiar with in previous engagements we began to wonder if they would violate other Indian precedents and continue the battle into the night.

It was not until three or four o'clock that we noticed any lessening in their efforts to retake the ridge. At the best this afforded us only a short breathing-spell. There were many warriors still hidden along the slopes drained by Crooked Creek. Our line was so long there was always danger of the Indians concentrating and breaking it.

So long as we stuck to the ridge on the defensive the enemy had the advantage of the initiative. A runner brought up word from Colonel Lewis to learn the strength of the savages in the hills along the creek, and I was directed to reconnoiter.

I MADE for the creek from the south slope of the ridge. Sliding down the muddy bank, I ascended the opposite slope and began making my way toward the point where the creek cut through the ridge. I encountered no Indians, although axes and knives on the ground showed where they had been stationed before retiring.

I passed through the cut and was suddenly confronted by what I thought at first must be the devil. The fellow was wearing the head of a buffalo, horns and tangled forelock and all. Through the eye-slits gleamed living eyes. The shock of his grotesque appearance threw me off my guard for a moment. He leaped upon me and we went down the bank into the bed of the creek.

He had his ax ready to use but I caught his hand. His hideous mask proved to be his undoing, for as we rolled about it became twisted. I was quick to see my advantage. Relying on one hand to hold his wrist, I used all my quickness and strength and succeeded in turning the mask half-way around, leaving him blind and half-smothered. I killed him with his own ax before he could remove his cumbersome headgear.

As none of his companions had come to his rescue I knew this marked their most advanced position in the hills. Having learned all I could without sacrificing my life, I began my retreat down the creek and narrowly escaped being shot by one of our own men.

Captain Shelby ordered me to report to Colonel Lewis, which I did, running at top speed without attempting to keep under cover. I found the reserves had thrown up a breastwork from the Ohio to the Kanawha, thus inclosing the camp on the Point. It lacked half an hour of sunset when I reached the camp.

Colonel Lewis heard me, then ordered Captains Isaac Shelby, Arbuckle, Matthews and Stuart to lead their companies up Crooked Creek under cover of the bank until they could secure a position behind the Indians and enfilade their main line. I scouted ahead of this force. We circled the end of the Indian line, but were at once discovered.

Instead of this being our undoing, it proved to be all in our favor. Cornstalk's spies had kept him informed of Colonel Christian's presence a few miles from the Point. He took it for granted that this force in the hills behind his line was reinforcements brought up by Christian, and this belief caused him to order a general retirement across Old Town Creek. At that time Christian was fifteen miles from the Point. Sunset found us in full possession of the battle-field.

Leaving strong outposts, we retired to the well-protected camp, rejoicing loudly and boasting of more than two-score scalps. We carried off all our dead and wounded. The exact Indian loss was never definitely settled but it must have equaled, if not exceeded, ours. More than a score were found in the woods covered deep with brush, and many were thrown into the river.

This battle ended Dunmore's War, also known as Cresap's War and the Shawnee War. So far as actual fighting and losses are considered it was a drawn battle. But as Cornstalk could not induce his men to renew the conflict, and inasmuch as they retreated before morning to the Indian shore, the victory must be held to be with the backwoodsmen.

And yet the tribes were not entirely downcast, for during the early evening they continued to taunt us and to repeat their threats of bringing an army of two thousand on to the field in the morning. In fact, many of our men believed the savages had a shade the best of the fight, and would renew hostilities in the morning.

THAT night we buried Shelby Cousin on the bank of the Kanawha and built a fire over his grave to conceal it. Colonel Christian arrived at midnight, and there was some lurid profanity when his men learned they had arrived too late for the fighting. One week after the battle eleven hundred troops crossed the Ohio to carry the war to the Indian towns for a final decision.

When thirteen miles south of Chillicothe, the town Governor Dunmore had ordered us to attack and destroy, a message arrived from his lordship, directing Colonel Lewis to halt his advance, for peace was about to be made. Hostile bands had fired upon us that very morning, and the position was not suitable for a camp. Colonel Lewis continued the march for a few miles. Another messenger arrived with orders for us to halt, for the peace was about to be consummated.

We went into camp on Congo Creek, about five miles from Chillicothe. The men raged something marvelous. They insisted that no decisive battle had been fought and that we had thrown away nearly a hundred lives if the fighting were not renewed. The Shawnees were in our power. What folly to let them escape!

Dunmore and White Eyes, the friendly

Delaware chief, rode into camp and conferred with Colonel Lewis; and as a result we started the next day for Point Pleasant and Virginia. The men were all but out of bounds, so furious were they at not being loosed at the Shawnees.

Then began the talk that Dunmore brought on the war to keep our backwoodsmen busy in event the colonies rebelled against England; also, that he closed it prematurely so that the Indians might continue a menace to the border and thus keep the frontier men at home.

I was as hot as any against his lordship for the way the campaign ended. We demanded blood for blood in those days; and never had the Virginia riflemen a better chance for inflicting lasting punishment on their ancient foes. And we were quick to blame his lordship for a variety of unwholesome motives.

But with political rancor long since buried, we can survey that campaign more calmly and realize that as a result of the battle the northwest Indians kept quiet for the first two years of the Revolutionary War, and that during this period Kentucky was settled and the vast continent west of the Alleghanies was saved to the Union.

If the battle of Bushy Run took the heart out of the tribes confederated under Pontiac's masterly leadership, then Dunmore's War permitted us to begin life as a republic without having the Alleghanies for our western boundary. Nor can I hold in these latter days that his lordship was insincere in waging the war; for England was against it from the first.

I believe he pushed the war as vigorously and shrewdly as he knew how; and I believe his was the better judgment in securing the best peace-terms possible instead of heaping defeat on defeat until the allied tribes had nothing left to bargain for. So I give his lordship credit for making a good bargain with the Indians, and a bargain which aided the colonists during the struggle almost upon them. But I was very happy when Colonel Andrew Lewis drove him from Virginia.

CHAPTER XIII

PEACE COMES TO THE CLEARING

EARLY Winter, and the wind was crisp and cold as I rode into Howard's Creek. Smoke rose from the cabins. I limped toward the Davis cabin, a strange shyness holding me back. Some one inside was singing:

"Ye daughters and sons of Virginia incline
  Your ears to a story of wo;
I sing of a time when your fathers and mine
  Fought for us on the Ohio.
In seventeen hundred and seventy-four,
  The month of October, we know,
An army of Indians, two thousand or more,
  Encamped on the Ohio."

There was a whirl of linsey petticoats behind me, and two plump arms were about my neck; and her dear voice was sobbing:

"They didn't know! I feared you were dead beyond the Ohio!"

"But I sent you a message!" I protested, patting her bowed head. "I sent word by Moulton that it was only an arrow-wound in the leg, and that I must wait."

"And he never came, nor brought your word! He stopped in Tygart's Valley and sent his brother to bring Mrs. Moulton and the children. One man said he heard you had been hurt. I wrote to Colonel Lewis, but he was not at Richfield. So I never knew!"

We walked aside, and I petted her and listened to her dear voice and forgot the cold wind biting into my thin blood, forgot I would always walk with a slight limp. When we did awake, because the early dusk was filling the clearing, the singer was finishing his seventeen-stanza song—

"As Israel did mourn and her daughters did weep,
  For Saul and his host on Gilbow,
We'll morn Colonel Field and the heroes who sleep
  On the banks of the Ohio."

And I thought of Shelby Cousin and the others, who gave their lives that we might meet thus without the war-whoop interrupting our wooing. And I wondered if our children's children would ever realize that the deaths died at Point Pleasant made life and happiness possible for them. I prayed it might be so, for lonely graves are not so lonely if they are not forgotten.

THE END

In His Prime

by Roger Daniels

THE beginning was back in the days when taking cargoes up and down the Great Lakes was no child's play. Donovan had reveled in it; coming down from Duluth, just a village then, a scattered place on the side of a hill, before winds that had sprung into being not nearer than the Rockies, gaining strength as they came; tearing past less skilful skippers; getting bonus money for record trips; that was life!

Then gradually had come the marvels of ore-loading, huge derricks and endless streams of carriers that made time fly; great steel ore-boats that numbered hatches well up in the twenties; clumsy-looking whalebacks that wallowed awash whenever the wind cut capers; the Poe lock that made the engineering-feat of the old one a mere stepping-stone to real achievement; the Canadian lock that could put through a ship in seven minutes. All these had warned Donovan of the changing order. The days gained were those in port. Running up and down the Lakes had become a scheduled thing. In these later years the record bonuses were won by the loading and unloading crews.

Donovan had turned to tugs. The old adventure still clung to the little fellows; theirs was still the catch-as-catch-can life, a grim fight for the survival of the fittest. In all this scheduled business of ore from Duluth and coal and what-not back—sometimes ballast—the tugs stood aloof; fought for tows; vied in the skill of handling log-rafts down the Lakes.

From as far back as he could remember; from the time he had planned to have the little house on the hill, a friendly place where a crony could yarn away the night, a place with a bit of garden in Summer and a well-stocked wood-pile in Winter, Captain Donovan had dreamed of this day when he would retire.

He had sensed something queer the day before when Mr. Warrington, owner of the tugboat company, had asked him to come down to the office in the morning. Every day Donovan's tug, the *Fannie L.*, was at the "Soo" he reported to the company office. Why in the world he should be requested specially to come, when they knew he would come anyway, was no small mystery. He had worried away the night over it. The first spirit of unrest in a whole untroubled life.

Promptly at the designated hour Donovan made his appearance at the company's office.

"We have decided to put you on the retired list, Captain Donovan," Warrington had said. "It is high time you had the rest you deserve. Young Sparks will take over the *Fannie L.* in the Spring."

Donovan might have been standing before a judge in black cap pronouncing the death-sentence. The word struck him numb and cold. Somehow he managed to make reply and had found his way out to the dock.

Now he stood there bewildered. To look at him one might have judged he was a modern Atlas with the world on his shoulders. Slowly he picked his way along the dock, all unmindful of salutations, and after the longest walk of his life came to the snug little house on Gore Street, on the top of the hill that overlooks the town, from where one can see the lower reaches of Superior or the channel lose itself around Sugar Island down-river.

It was his custom on reaching the summit to pause a moment and with his eye sweep the river west and east, as a fond father might watch his children at play. Never had he missed the opportunity the hill offered. Now he trudged up the walk into the house with never a backward glance.

He buried himself in the red-plush rocker that faced the built-in fireplace, the mantel of which was adorned with trimmings from half-forgotten tugboats. He gazed absently at the brass clock, centrally placed among the relics. Quarter past eight. It was barely an hour since he had gone down to the company's office. It seemed like a lifetime. For the better part of fifty years he had lived for this hour.

Times without number before this very fireplace or down at the genial Algoma he had told his friends of the things he would do when he retired. Through that inward eye of the mind he had seen himself lording it over the younger men and telling of the feats he had performed. They would laugh at him if he dared tell of them now. The pretty picture was smashed to atoms. And by that insignificant Warrington. The shame of it; the irony; the bitterness. He had been laid on the shelf in his prime. His life of usefulness was outlived. He had been fired!

Yet he could not and would not believe it. Mr. Warrington had make a mistake. But the little clock on the mantel sadly ticked back to him that he was wrong. It was true. And it cut deeper than any knife.

The *Fannie L.* was hauled up for minor repairs that morning so there was nothing for him to do but sit in front of the fireplace, gaze at its rusty irons and rake over the ashes of his vanished dreams. Only the week before he had looked to his guns and put them in order, not that they needed attention, but rather, with a fatherly fondness.

If he knew the Great Lakes from Duluth to Buffalo and every inch between, so also he knew every twist and turn the Upper Goulais made. He had whipped trout from one end of it to the other; when snow came he knew where the moose-runs crossed its banks. The Upper Goulais was to have been the land of his retirement.

As he loved the life of the Lakes, so too, he loved the great open stretches of the Height of Land; the sheer falls of granite over which white water tumbled; the unbeaten paths through the Great Bush that lay north of Superior.

Every yearning hope had been put away carefully against the day when he would lord it over those hills in season and out. Now all that was gone.

SUMMER had been hot, stifling. So when the season changed to the more pleasant Indian Summer, the Soo felt relief and was glad. But none of its smiles touched the heart of Donovan. He coveted each day as man covets life itself.

In anticipation of its five months' rest, shipping grew heavier. Donovan, like a man in a dream, bent himself in the stream of lake-traffic late and early, striving as he never had before, in the feeble hope that Mr. Warrington might see his error and retrieve the awful blunder. But no such reconsideration appeared to be forthcoming. The only ray of hope he had was that Mr. Warrington had told no one else of his retirement. Neither had young Sparks been told that he was to have the *Fannie L.* in the Spring. Donovan prayed with all his heart and soul that some chance might come to redeem all that had been lost.

The warm days lingered. The schedule of the Lakes clung on. Donovan robbed each hour of each day of the wealth that suddenly had come to mean so much to him. Then to put hurried halt to such unprecedented liberties came Winter in one night. Morning found St. Mary's River filled with ice, brought down through the rapids from Lake Superior. Abruptly all shipping ceased.

During the next few days belated freighters were caught in the floes and limped into improvised Winter moorings, storm-battered and shrouded with ice. Donovan took the *Fannie L.* to her berth with the air of a man going to his own funeral. Still he was loathe to leave. He was resolute in his determination to stay aboard until the tug was ice-bound. He would remain to the bitter end.

There was no comfort for him in the preparations of the river-front, laying up for the Winter. What if the whole little world of the Lakes had stopped short for the time being with its mind turned toward

Spring, anticipating five months' rest and then the new season? Donovan had come to the end of the tether. He had moored the *Fannie L.* for the last time.

The Winter now coming on, already here in fact, held nothing for him. Spring was a hideous nightmare. He tried to argue with himself that he should not take it so hard, but the argument proved futile. When a man has lived his life toward a certain goal, whether that goal be fame, fortune or second youth, it breaks his heart to see his goal vanish as completely as a bubble bursts. Donovan's goal had done just that. Try as he might, he could not bring himself to see it in any other light.

His only hope lay in Mr. Warrington, and now that lake-traffic had virtually ended, even that hope had vanished. Still he refused to leave the *Fannie L.* until the last vestige of life on the Lakes was frozen in. Still he kept up steam and waited for the undreamed, whatever it might be, wherever it might lead, to save him.

And even as he waited there came tidings that swept over the Soo like the knell of calamity. The last boat to come struggling down Superior brought the story that the keepers of Whitefish Light had had their boat crushed in the ice trying to get off. The tale spread from home to home all over the Soo.

Every living soul in the town knew within the hour that the men were nearly out of provisions and that it would be weeks before the ice was frozen solid enough to bear them to mainland. Tragedy was so close it seemed just the other side of the Soo's backyard fence. Something must be done. The lighthouse tender had been forced to tie up somewhere below Mackinac. In its stead the government revenue cutter *Ottawa* went to rescue the imprisoned men.

Donovan, standing in the pilot-house of the *Fannie L.*, watched the *Ottawa* go. The cutter was a smart something. Too smart, too bedecked in brass and fittings, mused Donovan as he watched her. He knew the job ahead. It was a rough-and-ready job, the kind of work the *Fannie L.* was built for. He was on the point of putting the thought into action when another brain-musing told him to bide his time. The *Ottawa* would fail.

He was not moved to deep pity for the men at the light. Ordinarily his heart would have gone out to them. Now it was far too heavy to respond to any call but one, and as he thought of the light-keepers, Donovan was very sure that the call was coming. What if it should spell failure for him as well as for the *Ottawa*? If it did he would not come back to tell of it. There was not the remotest fear in the thought.

Even as he stood in the pilot-house of his tug he was as much cut off from the world he had lived for as were the men at the light. He knew ice could tear wicked gashes in the best of hulls. But old Superior was kind and let sleeping things lie. Her dead never came back. Patiently he bided his time and waited for the *Ottawa* to return.

IT WAS late in the afternoon of the following day that the government cutter reappeared above St. Mary's Rapids, steaming slowly down toward the locks. An eager, expectant crowd had gathered by the time she came in. They had gathered fearfully and half-expected the news that soon swept wraith-like up and down the locks and out beyond into the town. The light-keepers were not on the *Ottawa*. She had tried to reach them again and again, only to be pushed roughly aside by the grinding, merciless ice. If the story spread gloom over the whole town, it fired the heart of Donovan.

Barely had the *Ottawa* reached her mooring when the *Fannie L.* rasped away from hers, backwatered into the channel and blew for the lock. The strident challenge of it settled down over river and town like a battle-cry. Mr. Warrington, in the tugboat office going over the season's record of profit and loss, heard it. He went to the window to make sure and then grabbed madly for his hat and coat.

Fifteen minutes later he was bobbing up and down the lock wall like a loose-jointed jumping-jack, a screaming fury who hurled anathema at the imperturbable Donovan. The truth of the matter was that for all his haste Mr. Warrington had arrived at the lock a trifle too late to stop either Donovan or the *Fannie L.* The upper gate had swung open. The *Fannie L.* had flung off both bow and stern lines.

The only answer Mr. Warrington had for all his racket was a mocking *swush-swush* that bubbled fiendishly under the tug's stern as she got away. But the little owner stuck to his task manfully. He ran along the lock wall for half a mile, cursing and praying by turn, and stopped finally, only from sheer despair.

"See what comes of trusting a first-class tug to a doddering old numbskull!" he wailed. "Donovan should have been retired years ago."

As his mind went back to the profit and loss figures he had another fit of sorrow. The *Fannie L.* was gone; that was certain. Mr. Warrington never expected to see the tug again.

When Donovan swung clear of the ship canal and veered the tug around until she butted her stubborn nose against the current and the teeth of the wind, he knew well that there was a real night's work to be done. The tug was lashed down ready for it. He held her so she skirted the larger floes and made her cut viciously into the smaller ones. There would come a dull thud as he put her head on into a heavy mass of ice, wormed her bow shrough it, and then eased away to send the great lumps a-thumping along her beam. She was built for rough work and held to her task grimly.

They had laid him on the shelf in his prime. He would show them! Point aux Pines slipped past, a purple-black smudge against the northern horizon. Up beyond its dark shadow was to have been the land of his retirement; all that was gone now; the most he could hope for was to save his pride.

It was nearly midnight when intermittent flashes of light cut through the black night directly ahead. The men were still at Whitefish. Donovan leaned into his work. The wheel could spin like a saucer in oil, but he held it in a grip of iron and put his weight to the turn as if he were taking the tug to port or starboard through the ice-field by sheer strength.

The *Fannie L.*, as if part of him, dodged this way and that, getting her blunt nose down every now and then to butt a recalcitrant floe and send it swirling and groaning along her flank out of the course.

Another hour passed before Donovan brought the tug to half-speed. Far above, the light winked feebly, its lenses fashioned to save the whiter gleam for the distant channel, the flash of it cutting a wide arc through the inky blackness overhead. He saw three waving figures, outlined against the base of the light's towering shaft and thought he caught a faint hallo. There was no time to waste with mere signals. Rather, Donovan was busy with the lay of things. Cautiously, as a cat picks its way up a strange alley, he felt a course through the slush ice between the menacing floes, slowly circling the light.

He saw that the floes coming down the lake had piled an ever changing barrier of ice around the rocks on which the light stood. It was evident that in attempting to launch their boat through this grinding barrier, the light-keepers had met disaster. The tug might easily have plowed her way through it but the water there was shallow and kept her off. It would be folly for the men to attempt to swim through the freezing water to the tug. Some way must be found to reach them. The task looked impossible. Little wonder it had baffled the *Ottawa*.

Twice Donovan sent the tug creeping around this wicked strip of rock and ice as he tried to find a way to the imprisoned men. Then the gong in the engine-room clanged a staccato order. The tug swung suddenly into the wind. Donovan had found his element. They had shelved him in his prime. He, who could handle a raft with the best of them. The *Ottawa* had known nothing of rafts.

Some two hundred yards up the lake a huge floe loomed up through the darkness, bearing down past the light. There was a raft to handle. An ice-raft that weighed tons. A battering-ram that could laugh at shallow water and jagged rocks and crash through the barrier of ice surrounding the light as a thrown brick shatters glass.

The job was to put it to work. With a full head of steam Donovan sent the tug quivering into it; fought for warping-room; gained an inch; slowly forced the sullen mass to a halt. Then began the struggle for dear life.

The steam-exhaust from the tug roared like some beast of prey as she flung the ice-raft back against the current. Then Donovan swung her clear again and went hard to port, circling the ice-floe until the tug could poke her nose into the up-lake end of it. Then the exhaust chanted a double fury against the wind, as the *Fannie L.*, almost lifting her bow out of the water, sent the huge mass to bore down on the barrier that had made the *Ottawa's* attempt futile.

The men at the light grasped what was happening and in another moment as the huge ice-raft smashed through Donovan bellowed and they ran for it, making a wild scramble over the bridge of ice to the tug. They tumbled over the side of the tug just before the whole mass of ice heaved, hung motionless for a second and then crumbled into a thousand pieces with the black water surging up through the ever widening crevices. Snorting triumph, the *Fannie L.* churned back from the rocks to safety.

IT WAS dawn, when Donovan brought her, bruised and weary, down through the locks. He had run up every sign of a flag the tug's locker possessed and it was with gaily floating pennons that she made her triumphal return. News of her coming brought half the Soo to her dock by the time she had locked through. Little Mr. Warrington hoped the town was there in its entirety as he bounded over the tug's side and burst into Captain Donovan's arms.

"Hurrah for Donovan!" he cried. "I knew you could do it! I knew you could do it!"

Every whistle along the river shrieked bedlam. There were other praises and rousing cheers, hosts of them. Words of heartfelt thanks were mingled with the tears of joy from relatives and friends of the rescued light-keepers. But Donovan hardly heard. His ear was tense for something else from Mr. Warrington's lips. It came when the first fluster was over. Donovan was graciously asked to come to the tugboat office.

"We have made a grave error, Captain Donovan," said Mr. Warrington rather pompously. "Young Sparks, fortunately, has not been told, so there is no difficulty about it. Of course you will take over the *Fannie L.* in the Spring!"

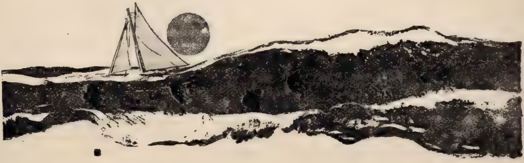
If on the former occasion, the tugboat office had yawned suddenly abysmal to him, now with equal suddenness it crowded down upon and cramped Donovan. He wanted to take a full breath, the first for weeks. The dingy little place was entirely too small to hold him. He burst forth into the freer air.

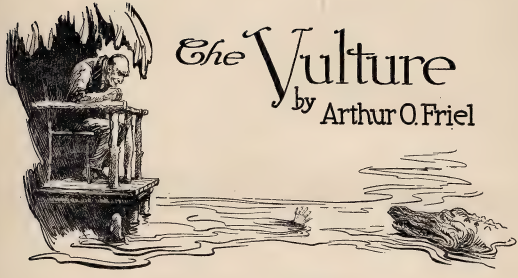
As he hurried down the dock he smiled right and left to all who passed. Yet for all his haste he gained the summit of Gore Street some ten minutes later with barely heaving lungs. Arrived there, he lingered, as was his custom, while his eye swept the river west and east. He saw that the lower reaches of Superior were gray; a white bar blocked the channel around Sugar Island. Then he entered the house.

He might have been an hour, perhaps two, in his labor of putting everything shipshape. At last the smallest relic on the mantel was in order. The brass clock ticked peacefully. The iron kettle sang merrily on the crooked hook over the fire. The tiniest speck had vanished from his resplendent guns. His shoe-packs were newly greased. Then, and not until then, did he pause in his work of putting everything ready for the new day. Satisfied with his efforts, he searched for pen and paper and drew himself up to his table.

"WELL, would you look at that!" gasped the astonished Mr. Warrington, the next morning over his mail.

Donovan, climbing down from the jerky lumber train of the Algoma Central at the Goulais River crossing, winked knowingly at the snow-capped hills and wondered how much consternation his resignation had caused. Truly, his day had come. And the way he had planned it!





The Vulture

by Arthur O. Friel

Author of "The Tapir," "The Vampire," etc.

I BELIEVE that story of yours, *senhor.* You tell me that while you two North Americans were far out on the great ocean, steaming southward on your way to explore our Amazon headwaters, a vulture came speeding from nowhere and settled in the rigging of another boat near you; and that soon afterward a terrible storm swept that vessel to her doom.

Yes, I believe it. For I know, as all Brazilians know, the fiendish power those ugly birds have of scenting death even before death strikes. And we rubber-workers of the wild Javary region, who see much of death, see much also of those vile things which live on death.

Sometimes, *senhores,* we see vultures without wings, which walk about in the shape of men. Yes, human vultures, who scent human weakness as do their foul brothers of the air, and come from afar to prey on that weakness until they have stripped their victims to the bare bones. And now, while we stream on down the Amazon, I can tell you the tale of one of those creatures—a tale of the bush but yet not of the bush; for these things came about not in the depths of the unknown jungle but in a jungle town on the banks of the Javary.

That town is Remate de Males. In your language Remate de Males means "culmination of evils." Yet it is not a bad town, as these upper Amazon towns go. It got its name, I have heard, from the sufferings of the first people who settled there—fever and famine and other misfortunes which attacked them until out of twenty settlers only four survived. Even now it is no real town like Manaos and other places on this great river.

But to us *seringueiros,* who toil for months among the dangers and diseases of the swamp-lands, it is a place where we can go and amuse ourselves when the floods drive us from our work. And when men have labored long in the wilderness with Death always lurking at their backs, any town where they can play is not a bad town at all.

At the time of high water I came into Remate de Males with a young comrade, Pedro Andrada, who, like myself, worked on the big *seringal* of Coronel Nunes. We were more than fellow workers; we were comrades. Recently we had been out on a long roving trip along the Brazilian-Peruvian frontier, and had come back so gaunt and tired that we were glad to rest for a time at the headquarters of the *coronel.*

But after a few days of ease we found this very dull, since most of the other men had gone out to spend their time and money at their homes, or, if their homes were too far away, at Remate de Males. So, after drawing some money from the *coronel,* we paddled down the river for several days until we reached the town.

There we hitched our dugout to one of the posts before the door of a trader named Joaquim, whom we knew well, and went inside. Several friends of ours were loafing there, and for a time they kept us busy telling of our adventures on that rambling trip. Then we asked what we could do to enjoy ourselves. They grinned.

"If you have a pocketful of money you can do anything you like at the house of Urubu," answered one.

"The house of the Vulture? I do not understand," I said.

"You are behind the times, Lourenço," another man laughed. "You have not been here since the last flood; is it not so? We now have a real *urubu*, and he will give you any game you like and pick you clean."

"This sounds interesting," said my comrade Pedro, his brown eyes twinkling. "Remate de Males is becoming quite a city. What sort of thing is this Urubu of which you speak?"

Then spoke Joaquim the trader, and his tone was sour:

"He is a *remate de males* in himself. If there is anything worse than he I have not yet seen it. He takes the life from honest men and devours their bodies afterward."

The men looked at one another. Then one said:

"That is a hard thing to say, Joaquim. I think you are jealous because we spend money there instead of here. Urubu is no cannibal."

"Where are Ricardo Bautista and Alberto Alencar?" demanded Joaquim. "Each was drunk at his place, and the next morning each was gone. Gone where? No man has seen them since."

Nobody spoke. Joaquim went on.

"I would not say that he actually ate them. But there is a *jacare-assu*—a huge alligator—living under his house, and perhaps that reptile could tell things if he would. A *jacare* does not live where it finds no food."

Again there was silence. Then Helio Alves said slowly:

"I have been wondering what became of that girl Januaria. You remember her, friends—the big girl with the very red mouth. I liked her. The last time I saw her she said she was going to quit him. That was nearly a week ago. Has any one seen her lately?"

The others shook their heads. A fellow named Miguel said:

"There has been no boat this week. She must be here still. Perhaps she is sick."

"Ask that *jacare* under the house where she is," sneered Joaquim.

"I will ask Urubu to his face where she is," growled Helio.

"And I will ask Maria, my own sweetheart, what has become of her," added Miguel.

I BROKE in then and told them we were still waiting to learn who and what this Urubu might be. Miguel told me:

"His name is Aracu. But some man who was half-drunk in his place, so that his tongue got twisted, called him Urubu, and the name fitted him so well that he has been Urubu here ever since. He looks like a king vulture.

"He came first, they tell me, to Nazareth, across the river there in Peru. He wanted a house here in Remate de Males, where more people come; but he could not find one empty and he would not build one. Instead he got Domicio Malaguetta to drinking and gambling in his place in Nazareth. Domicio owned the finest house here, except the hotel. Before long that house and everything in it belonged to Urubu.

"Domicio and his family had to go and live in a mean little *barracão*, where he and his wife died of fever. The place that used to be Domicio's home is now a house of entertainment run by Urubu. Perhaps you remember Domicio."

I did remember Domicio. He had been quite a prosperous trader, and a steady sort of man, though fond of his drink. I was sorry to hear of his miserable end. As I thought of it I remembered something else.

"Domicio had a pretty young daughter," I said. "What has become of her?"

"She is in the house of Urubu. She had no money, and a girl must live. She is not so pretty now."

At this we scowled. The daughter of Domicio was nothing to us, but this thing displeased us. Miguel went on:

"There are other girls. Where they come from I do not know, but they come here with Domengos Peixoto. Domengos is a great friend of Urubu, and he seems quite prosperous now. He wears a gold watch and chain, travels up and down the big river, and does not drink so hard as he did."

This was surprizing news to us. When we had last been here this Domengos Peixoto had been a low, ragged drunkard whom nobody liked and nobody would trust—a hanger-on at places where card-games were played, and always thirsting for a drink. It was hard to imagine him sober, well dressed and traveling about like a gentleman.

"I see," said Pedro, his voice hard. "Domengos travels on the river—and brings girls here. I see. I think I will go and look at Domengos. I am curious to know how he looks with his face washed."

"He is not here now," said some one. "He has been away for a time."

"Then I will look at this Urubu who owns Domengos. I suppose I shall not offend you by offering to buy you all a drink?"

Every one sat up as if he had suddenly heard a voice calling him.

"To show you how much offended I am," Miguel laughed, "I will allow you to buy me two drinks."

We trooped out, leaving Joaquim looking after us sourly, but wistfully too. After what he had said, he could not well go to the house of Urubu and drink. Perhaps he consoled himself with some of his own *cachassa* when we were gone.

In our dugouts and *montarias* we paddled up the street, where the water was several feet deep, to the house of Urubu. Pedro and I had never been in it before, for Domicio Malagueita had not invited *seringueiros* to be his guests. Now we found it fitted with the furnishings of a comfortable home, but with some partitions taken out to make a long room across the front.

In this room, around several small tables, sat a few men and girls quietly playing cards. Another girl, lolling in a richly colored hammock at one end, was picking idly at a wire guitar. A sort of bar ran half-way across the room beside the farther wall, and on it were a liquor-jar and a few cups.

"Wake up!" shouted Miguel. "Here are Lourenço Moraes and Pedro Andrada, with a six-months' thirst and pockets full of money. Where is that Urubu? We want drinks!"

They woke up. The men, most of whom knew us, shouted greetings. The women swiftly looked us over and then smiled and called to us. The one in the hammock sat up, and I saw that she was the Malagueita girl. She had been rather proud and shy, but now she was as bold as any of them. She made eyes at my handsome partner and asked if he would buy her a drink too.

"I buy for all, little one," said Pedro, as if he did not remember her. "My thirst is long and my pocket strong. Boys and girls, let us see who can empty his cup quickest. Who fills the cups?"

"I," said a deep voice behind the bar. A door had opened there, and beside the jar and cups stood Urubu.

AS MIGUEL had said, the man looked like a king vulture—that bird which drives the common buzzards from their feasts to gorge himself. Bulky and squat, with humped shoulders, he had also the vulture's head and face. His head, blunt as a bullet, was red and bare except for a little short black hair. His nose was a hooked beak. His eyes were cold as those of the bird of death. His mouth was a hard slit. His hands, curled around cups on the bar, looked like claws. Looking at him and remembering what I had just been told, I felt that the drunken man who named him Urubu had been only drunk enough to speak truth.

He watched us with a cold stare. His mouth stretched into a smirk.

"What is your pleasure, *senhores?*" he asked.

"What have you?" Pedro wanted to know.

"Anything you like. *Cachassa*, of course," and he pointed a thumb at the jar, "or *aguardiente*, *cauim*—all those things. There is also fine liquor from Europe and North America—cognac, whisky, gin, cordials—whatever you wish, *senhores*."

"I have drunk no liquor but *cachassa* for months," said Pedro. "I want something fancy. Make me a tail of the cock."

Urubu stared. So did the rest of us.

"A what?" demanded Urubu.

"A tail of the cock. An American whom I knew in Santarem used to make them for himself, and they are very fine. They are made by mixing several things together. Can you make one?"

"Certainly I can make you a cocktail, *senhor*. I did not quite understand you."

He reached under the bar, produced several bottles, mixed up the liquors, and asked—

"What will your broad-shouldered friend have?"

I said I would have a cocktail also. The others ordered their drinks, and we quickly emptied our cups.

Pedro and I burst out coughing. That drink was the worst I had ever swallowed. Every one laughed at us except Urubu, whose face was like wood.

"What do you call that?" demanded Pedro angrily. "That is no tail of the cock."

"Perhaps you have forgotten the taste of a real cocktail," answered Urubu, a slight sneer in his tone. "Or perhaps you are accustomed to such drinks as are made for girls."

"Perhaps you are accustomed to mixing drinks only for ignorant Indians—the kind of Indians who eat rotten turtle," retorted Pedro. "And if you think me a girl, step out here and I will show you how girlish I am."

For a moment it was very quiet. Unwinking, expressionless, the vulture eyes of Urubu stared into the hot brown eyes of my comrade. Then his slit of a mouth stretched again and he shrugged his humpy shoulders.

"Do not be so hasty, *senhor*," he said. "That was only my little joke. Perhaps the American *senhor* made his cocktails differently—there are several ways of mixing those drinks. Will you have some of the North American whisky?"

"I will drink anything to take this taste out of my mouth."

"Then here is something very fine."

The beak-nosed man set a bottle on the bar.

"You see it is a new bottle, and the cork has not been drawn."

"Yes, and I see that I do not want it," refused Pedro. "I have seen that label before. The American *senhor* had a bottle like that one. He said that the stuff in it looked like whisky and tasted like whisky, but it was really Old Crow. I do not want anything made from old crows. Give me some *cachassa*."

Urubu said nothing more. I had some *cachassa* also, and the familiar taste soothed my tongue. The vulture-man glanced at the Malagueita girl, who stood beside Pedro and drank with him. At once she invited Pedro to sit in her hammock and let her play to him.

"Gladly, my lady," he accepted. "I have not heard a guitar for a long time." And they turned away.

I too turned and took a few steps toward one of the card-tables. Then I whirled on my heel. As I expected, the eyes of Urubu were on my partner's back, and there was a threat in them—a threat of evil that put me on my guard. I strode to the bar.

"More meat for the *jacare*," I said in a low tone. "Was that what you were thinking?"

For the first time his eyelids flickered. His unpleasant gaze centered on my face. After a minute he answered—

"I do not get your meaning, *senhor*."

"I think you do," I shot back. "And make no mistake. We are men of the bush, he and I, and we are accustomed to *jacares*—and to *urubus* also."

With another shrug he said he did not quite grasp my little joke. I said no more, for no more was necessary. But Helio, who had been standing near, now spoke up.

"I do not see Januaria here," he said. "Where is she?"

"She has fever," Urubu answered promptly. "I sent her down to the Solimoes, where the air is better."

"When? How? To what place on the Solimoes?"

"When? When she was taken sick. The fever came on her late at night, and I saw it would be bad, so I sent her out at once to Tabatinga."

"How?" insisted Helio. "Who took her?"

"By canoe. Ricardo Bautista and Alberto Alencar were here, and they paddled away with her."

"Ricardo and Alberto! They disappeared weeks ago."

"I know. They had no money left, so they went down-river to earn some. They came back together late that night, and I coaxed them to take her away until she should be well. Ricardo was a friend of Januaria, you remember."

Helio nodded slowly as if that were true, but he could not believe the rest of it. Without saying anything further he took another drink and then sat down at a table. The rest of us also drifted to the tables, and I sat for a time smoking, drinking, and talking to a couple of men who, like myself, were not in the mood for cards. One of the women bothered me at first with her attentions, but after I succeeded in discouraging her I was left in peace.

THE Malagueita girl, I noticed, was softly singing love-songs to Pedro, but he did not seem much interested. After a time he looked at me, moved his head toward the door, and arose. Urubu, who had been standing quiet and waiting, looked sharply at our rolls of milreis as we paid for all the drinks. Then he asked why we left so soon.

We told him the truth—that we must find a place to live in. He urged us to stay there, saying he could make room for us and would make us very comfortable. The girls, of course, said the same. But we refused and went out.

"A cold rascal," said my partner as we paddled away. "He spoiled my thirst, and I dislike him much. But I intend to see more of him. He interests me."

Back to the store of Joaquim we went, and there we tied our canoe as before.

"We have seen your Urubu and we do not like him," I told him. He grinned in a satisfied way.

"I knew you would not," he answered. "You two are not blind spendthrifts, and you have heads on your shoulders. Yet if you would buy supplies here you had best buy them now, for Urubu will get your money as he gets that of others."

"How?"

"By drink, gambling, women—or in other ways. I know you are not easily made drunk and are not passionate gamblers or lovers of women, but he will get you in some way. I am surprized that he did not ask you to stay there until your money was gone."

We answered that Urubu had done so, but that we preferred to live elsewhere and had come to ask if he knew of a place. We added that if we could find a house where we could live by ourselves we should want to buy a number of things in his store. It did not take him long to think of the place we wanted, and soon we were settled in a small *barracão* facing the river Tecuahy.

Before long a *montaria* came up to our door, and in it was Helio, looking both doubtful and grim.

"I do not believe Urubu's story of Januaria," he growled. "She showed no sign of sickness when I last saw her. And the part about Ricardo and Alberto sounds queer to me. They did not disappear at the same time, and they were not comrades as you two are, so why should they work together and return together? And they were rough, hard men who thought only of themselves, and if they came back with money they would not let a girl's sickness interfere with their staying here and drinking.

"What is more, they have had plenty of time to return from Tabatinga, but they have not come back. The tale does not sound good to me at all. And what Joaquim said about the *jacare* disturbs me. It is true that a *jacare-assu* lives under the house of Urubu—I have seen the beast myself."

"Miguel was to talk to his sweetheart," I reminded him. "Perhaps he will learn something."

"He has talked to her and has learned nothing," Helio replied. "I have just seen Miguel. Maria said she knew nothing about Januaria's sickness or her going away. She would not talk about it, and she seemed afraid Urubu might overhear what Miguel said."

"That does not look very good either," said Pedro. "The story of Urubu may be true, and we can not prove it is not. But there is one thing you can do, Helio, if you are really interested in this matter. Say nothing to any one, but start at dawn tomorrow and go to Tabatinga. It is only about thirty miles, and you can soon learn whether your girl is there."

"I will do it!" vowed Helio. "I will go before any one else is awake. When I come back I will tell you what I find out."

He left us, putting a vicious punch into his strokes as he pulled away.

"I think," said Pedro, watching him, "that before long Helio and Urubu are going to have trouble."

"And I think," I added, "that if any one else here disappears I should like to kill that *jacare* and see what is inside him."

"I had the same thought," he nodded. "But I hardly believe there will be anything new before Helio returns."

He was not quite right. Before Helio came back to us something new did come about, and as the result of it my comrade forced himself into the affairs of the Vulture.

IN THE next two or three days we went several times to the house of Urubu. We lost a little money at cards, but not enough to hurt us much. We drank as much as we liked, but that was only enough to make us merry. And though the girls did their best to charm us we paid no more attention to them than to the men—joking with them, playing cards with them and buying drinks, but not allowing any foolishness.

We knew that this was not at all what Urubu wanted, but he gave no sign of impatience. The flood waters were high, we could do no work, and he had no reason to suppose we should go elsewhere before the dry season. So he watched and waited, as a true vulture watches and waits for its victim to fall into its power.

Then came a boat. On the boat came Domengos Peixoto. With Domengos came a girl. And then Pedro woke up.

The boat was one of these fine English steamers of the Amazon, which call at Remate de Males to leave passengers and mail. We were loafing in Joaquim's place when she came in, and for a minute we thought a fight had started down the street, for we heard yells and the explosions of rifles. But then came the hoarse roar of the whistle, and we knew the shouting and shooting were only the celebration that always welcomes the steamer.

Like the other men in the store, we started for our canoe. But in the confusion some man got our craft and paddled off in it before we could reach it. We promptly grabbed the next boat—a good-sized *montaria*—and in that we pulled away to the river.

Only four people left the steamer: two traveling traders, Domengos, and the girl. We gave no attention to the traders, but we were interested in the other two. Domengos, standing with his stomach stuck out importantly, looked for a boat to take him to the house of Urubu, but found none. Then he saw us and the roomy *montaria* we had borrowed.

"Here!" he called. "Come here to me. Take us to Urubu's place and I will give you a drink."

At his offensive tone we growled.

"We can buy our own drinks," retorted Pedro. "We are not boatmen for such as you. You can swim ashore. Unless you bathe more often than you used to it will do you good."

Domengos scowled and his face seemed to swell. But then he swallowed his rage and changed his manner.

"Oh, you are my old friends Pedro and Lourenço! I have not seen you for months, and I did not know you. Will you not take me and my niece to the house, old friends?"

"That tone sounds more familiar," said Pedro contemptuously. "It is the same one you used when you begged drinks from us last year. You can go——"

He stopped with a queer sort of gulp. His eyes had shifted to the girl, and sudden surprize had shot into his face.

I had only glanced at her, but now I looked at her more closely. She was rather small, but she appeared healthy and strong of body and pretty of face. These things were to be expected of a girl going to the house of the Vulture, but it was something else that interested me—she seemed shy, and she was looking at Domengos as if Pedro's scorn had stirred up doubt of her companion. Then Pedro spoke again, and like Domengos he had changed his manner.

"You can come with us. We have room for you."

Puzzled, I helped him move the *montaria* into position. Domengos started to get in, but Pedro blocked him.

"Hand the lady in first," he told him. "Have you no politeness?"

Domengos showed his teeth, but handed the girl down into the *montaria*. Pedro helped her to seat herself. Then, before Domengos could get in, he shoved the boat away.

Domengos teetered on his toes and narrowly escaped stepping off into the river. Other men in boats around us laughed.

"What is this?" demanded Domengos. "One of your jokes? Come back and take me in."

"I have changed my mind," grinned Pedro. "You can swim. Lourenço, paddle hard! Straight to our *barracão*!"

MUCH astonished, I heaved on my paddle and we surged away. Pedro also stroked hard a few times. Then he turned, faced the girl, and asked sharply—

"Angela, what are you doing here?"

A little cry of surprize came from her.

"Pedro! Pedro Andrada! I did not know you. How big you have grown!"

"Three years makes a difference in a man in this Javary country," he said. "Here a man must either be strong or die. But how come you here? Do you know that man Peixoto?"

Before she could answer yells from Domengos broke in.

"Stop them!" he bellowed. "They are stealing her! *Capitão*, they steal my niece! They are kidnapers of the bush! They will hold her for ransom or worse! Will you let a woman passenger be stolen under your nose? Stop them!"

"Halt there!" barked an English voice behind us.

Pedro only shoved his paddle in deep. We almost lifted the boat with our strokes.

"Halt!" roared the voice again. A moment later a bullet smacked on the water beside us, followed instantly by the crack of a rifle.

Pedro tossed his paddle in the air and held it there. I lifted mine too. The *montaria* kept on going of itself, but as we took no more strokes no more bullets came. The same voice barked orders on the steamer, and a ship's boat of men took the water and spurted after us.

While they came Pedro turned again to the girl.

"Angela," he said, "when I knew you in Santarem you were a good girl."

"And I am now!" she cried, her head high.

"I believe you. That is why I am doing what I do. Peixoto is not your uncle. You must not go with him. He is a lying dog, and he takes you to a place where no girl can go and remain good."

Then up swept the ship's boat, backed oars, and stopped. A gray-mustached, grim-faced officer with rifle in hand snapped:

"Hand over the lady, and be quick! What do you mean by this?"

"I mean to see that she is protected," Pedro explained with dignity. "You do not understand the matter. That Peixoto is a liar and worse—much worse. He brings an innocent girl here to put her in the house of the Vulture. Perhaps you can judge what sort of house that is by the name of it.

"I know this girl—we grew up in the same town, Santarem. She can tell you whether I am a woman-stealer or an honest man."

The keen eyes of the officer went to her. And though she was much disturbed she nodded quickly.

"It is true," she said. "I know Pedro, and he is to be trusted. And I—I do not know that other man well. He told me he would get me a fine place to work in the house of an English gentleman, where I could care for the children and live very well. He told me to say I was his niece so that we could travel without questions. I—I— Oh, what shall I do now?"

"Do not trouble yourself about that, Angela *mea*," Pedro soothed her. "You shall be well cared for until you can go home. You see, *senhor*, it is as I said."

The officer gazed shrewdly at him, at me, at Angela, and at other men in the boats around us. Snapping down a finger at one of those men and holding it like a revolver, he barked—

"You! What sort of a man is Peixoto?"

The man laughed harshly and told him just what sort of man Peixoto was. The officer nodded.

"I have wondered about him before this," he said. "He will not travel on our ship again. Give way!"

The oars dipped. The boat moved, turned, went back to the steamer. We saw Domengos being taken off, and not very gently.

"I think, Pedro," I said as we watched this, "that you have pushed Domengos off his perch. The officer said he would travel no more on the English boats. If he can not bring women here he will be useless to Urubu. He will soon be ragged and dirty again and whining for drinks as he used to. Are you not ashamed to have ruined so worthy a citizen?"

Pedro grinned and made some answer, but I lost it because the other men around us laughed and drowned his words. And the thing I had predicted came true, *senhores*—Domengos did become once more a hanger-on and beggar. But it was not because Urubu dismissed him. The big boats do not call often at that town, and before the next one came several things had happened which stopped any attempt he might have made to travel again.

NOW we pushed on toward our *barracão*, and there we heard more of the story of Angela. Domengos had found her, she said, not at Santarem but at Ega, a town much nearer to us and on the river Teffe. In the years since Pedro had left Santarem her mother had died and her father had moved to Ega, taking Angela with him. Then he too died, and she had to work in the house of an Italian settler whose wife was ill-tempered and treated her badly. This was very disagreeable for the girl, but she could not leave because she had no other home and never was given any money.

Then Domengos came, looking important and telling the people of Ega he was an up-river trader. He visited the white people of the town, who were glad to learn from him the latest news of affairs along the big river, and in this way he came into the house where she lived.

Soon after that he managed to talk with her alone and ask her questions, and she told him her whole story. Then he told her his lie about the English gentleman he knew, whose wife wanted a girl to help her with the children and would give her money and pretty things to wear. So, believing all he said and thinking him very kind, she took her few belongings and ran away from her bad-tempered mistress.

On the way up the river he treated her well, she said, and it was not until she heard Pedro's contemptuous answers that she began to suspect he was not the respectable trader he claimed to be. Even now she found it hard to realize that he was so bad, and asked if we were sure it was true. We left no doubt in her mind about that. We pointed out that he would not dare treat her ill on the steamer because there she could appeal to the captain and make trouble for him; but after he got her into the house of Urubu she would have found him a low dog.

We told her little about the Vulture, and nothing at all about the diasppearance of a girl and two men at his house. But she had heard enough to know it was far from being the sort of place she had expected, and now she looked very forlorn.

A poor little girl, homeless and penniless and deceived, with only us two hardened bushmen for friends and her dream of a happy life with kind people broken, she found it hard to hold back the tears. And when she stepped to the doorway and looked at the flooded town she could keep them back no longer.

"Even the town is dirty and dismal!" she cried. "Santarem and Ega are clean, green towns with fine sandy beaches, but this is nothing but a drowned mud-hole. And the air—the air is so damp it chokes me."

"Have courage, Angela," Pedro said. "You shall leave it on the next boat that goes down. We would put you on that steamer which brought you, but it is upbound and must go many miles westward before turning down again. This is a dreary place, as you say, but no harm shall come to you here."

"But where can I go from here? I have no money, and one can not travel free on the steamer. I have nothing at all—that Peixoto must have my bundle with my other dress and my beads and all."

"Do not trouble about the money," he urged her. "We will see to that. And if Domengos has anything of yours he will not keep it long. I will go and get it now."

Taking his rifle, he stepped toward the door. I too picked up my gun, but he told me to stay there and see that nobody bothered Angela. I hesitated, and then suggested that we take her with us and leave her for a time with Joaquim and his wife. This little *barracão*, I said, was no fit place for her, though it was good enough for him and me; and she would be more comfortable and fully as safe at Joaquim's place. He agreed that this was so.

"Come, Angela," he said. "You will like Paula, the wife of Joaquim, for she has a very good heart. And it will be better for you to stay there than here, for one never knows what may happen, and later on in your life some spiteful person might say you lived with two men here, and it might do you much harm."

So we took her to Joaquim's home. As we expected, he had already heard of the matter from other men, and after one look into Angela's innocent face he consented to her staying with his family. Paula, a motherly woman, also was glad to have her there, and the girl herself seemed to feel better for their hearty welcome.

"Now she will be safe," Pedro said as we paddled away.

"If she does not get fever," I added.

He nodded grudgingly, and I knew he thought of her words about the air choking her. The air of the Javary is heavy, and it is loaded with disease, as you *senhores* know well. And it is an odd thing but true that people accustomed to the air of the Amazon often sicken and die soon after leaving it for one of the branch rivers, even though they go only a few miles from the main stream. I wished now that I had not said that. But it was said, and I could not call it back. Neither of us spoke again until we reached the house of the Vulture.

Domengos had arrived there before us,

but neither he nor Urubu was in the big room. The men and girls loitering there sat up with a jerk as we strode in with our guns. We saw that they had heard the news. Nobody spoke, and all watched us in tense silence.

"Where is that *cachorro?*" growled Pedro, looking about him.

"That dog? What dog?" some one replied.

"That dog Peixoto. He has a bundle which is not his."

"He is inside talking with Urubu," a man answered. "The bundle he brought is there on the bar."

In six strides Pedro was at the bar and had seized a small package. I stood back and watched every one. As my partner turned away the door behind the bar opened, and through it came Domengos and Urubu.

"Behind you, Pedro," I said.

He whirled and faced them. But they made no threatening move. I do not think they had known we were there, for we had spoken quietly, and Urubu looked slightly surprized. Domengos seemed much distressed; his face glistened with sweat, and he cringed like a kicked cur. Urubu, I judged, had been saying unpleasant things to him.

"I thank you, Domengos, for leaving this bundle where I could get it so easily," Pedro mocked. "It will go straight back to its owner. If either or both of you wish to do anything about this matter, now is the time."

"You will pay me the passage money spent on your woman," sputtered Domengos.

"Are you sure? Come here to me and collect it."

DOMENGOS opened his mouth and let it stay open, but no words came. He looked sidewise at Urubu, whose harsh face remained expressionless. We knew well that the money spent on bringing Angela here had come from the pocket of the Vulture, not from that of Domengos. But he said no word.

Then Pedro cursed them both. He cursed them thoroughly and well. He called them such names as no real man would have swallowed. Yet he said nothing of the *jacare* under the house, or of the two men and the girl who had disappeared. He used fighting talk, meant to goad them into fight then and there.

But he had forgotten the nature of vultures. A vulture does not attack anything dangerous, nor did Urubu show fight now. And Domengos, looking at our faces and our guns, not only cringed still more—he cowered behind the bar.

When Pedro stopped, Urubu spoke coldly.

"Your talk is for Domengos, not for me. If he deceived any girl that is his mistake; I want no girl here who does not come of her own wish. When you have grown cooler you will realize that this is not such a place as you say. Our girls are well treated, as they will tell you, and no girl need stay here unless she wants to. And if Domengos has brought you a friend who does not know men that is your good fortune—if you care for green fruit. Every man to his taste."

"Bah!" snorted Pedro. "I will waste no more words on you except to tell you again that you are a foul liar."

He spat and turned to the door. I backed out, keeping my eyes on the pair behind the bar. We paddled away.

As we cruised down the street an odd thing happened. Up in the air two birds got to fighting, and one of them came tumbling down into the water, stunned and bleeding from a beak-blow on the head. We swung toward it, but before we reached it the water around it seethed and it was dragged under. Several fish showed for an instant on the surface. We knew them for *piranhas*, those strong-jawed fish which, maddened by blood, will chop to fragments any wounded creature they find.

"*Piranhas!*" muttered Pedro. "Here in the street! Perhaps they, and not the *jacare-assu*, could tell us what became of Ricardo and Alberto."

"If so, we shall know when the waters go down," I said. "There will be bones. The *jacare* would leave no bones, but would swallow all."

"Weeks must pass before this street will be dry," he answered. "Unless I am mistaken, we shall learn more before that time." And we did.

Back at Joaquim's place we gave the bundle to Angela. She had become more cheerful now, and with the return of her little treasures she smiled again. The smile and the warm look of gratitude she gave Pedro made me realize for the first time how pretty and appealing she was. I thought, too, that this strong but gentle-hearted comrade of mine was just such a man as she should have to protect her through life, and I saw Paula glance at Joaquim as if the same thought came to her.

But the young couple themselves seemed to have no such idea. Angela only asked whether he had had any trouble in getting the bundle, and he said no; he had simply picked it up and walked out with it.

Then we settled down to await the return of Helio. We did our waiting at Joaquim's, and there other men joined us—the quieter and steadier who did not care for the attractions of the Vulture's house, but who liked a drink and a card-game when in the mood. Joaquim, of course, was a trader, and his store was not built for a place of entertainment; but Pedro suggested that it would be good business to make room for some gaming-tables, sell us our drinks, and take some payment for the use of his store. When we pointed out that this would draw some trade away from Urubu he consented at once, and it was done.

Soon there were three sets of men in the town: those who would not go to the house of the Vulture, those who did go there for the women, and those who went to either Joaquim's or Urubu's as the whim took them. Through these men who went back and forth we kept well informed as to what went on at the Urubu house.

There was little news at first—a fight or two caused by drink and jealousy over the girls, but nothing of personal interest to us two. Then Miguel told us that both his girl Maria and the Malagueita girl were asking about us.

"I think, friends, that Urubu has been expecting you to tire of staying away and come back to have a lively time there," he said. "But now he is trying to learn through the girls whether you intend to keep on drawing away business to this store. And Anna Malagueita, your little friend of the hammock and guitar, seems eager to have you come and see her again, Pedro."

"Tell Maria that Urubu will be in a hotter place than this before we spend any more money in that house," said Pedro. "And I hope Anna will find a friend who will amuse her in my place. I stay here."

When we saw Miguel again he grinned and told us the Malagueita girl had asked him many questions about Angela, and whether she and Pedro were living together. He had said no, that Angela lived at Joaquim's, and Pedro saw no more of her than any one else there. Then she had told him to warn Pedro to be careful lest some unexpected misfortune come to him.

"She would not say what sort of misfortune," he went on. "Perhaps she does not know. But she was very anxious that I tell you, and she was nervous lest Urubu know that she sent the message. There is something behind it, I am sure."

"Thank her for me," said my partner, "and tell her I will keep my eyes open. And tell her if there is anything I can do to help her in return she has only to send word to me."

The truth was that Miguel was wrong when he said Pedro saw little of Angela. He was with her quite often, going into the family quarters behind the store and talking with her and Paula while I sat outside and told stories with other men. But Miguel spent more time at Urubu's place than with us, and he did not know this.

* * *

THE warning did not bother us, but it did make us keep our eyes open. And that same night, when we entered our *barracão* rather late after a game at Joaquim's, we nearly stepped on a big snake.

It was a *suruzuzu*. As you know, the bite of that snake means death, swift and sure. Even a small one will kill a strong man, and this one was more than six feet long. If we had not been a little more careful than usual one of us would have died that night.

It was our habit, on returning late, to find our hammocks and sleep without making any light. But this time, with the warning fresh in our minds, we thought it well to light a candle and look about us. And there on the floor not far from us was that deadly thing.

It had not yet coiled to strike, but lay as if about to do so. I yelled, jumped away, and threw my machete at it. The knife struck edge downward, cutting the reptile so that it was easily killed with a rifle-butt.

"As Miguel said, there seems to be something behind that warning," said Pedro. "This *barracão* is surrounded by water. So is the whole town. How did this beast come here?"

"Snakes sometimes come floating down on drifting trees," I reminded him. "It is possible that some small driftwood lodged against our door for a while and the *suruzuzu* crawled off it. But it is not at all likely."

"No. It will do no harm to look further and see whether we have any other guests."

After throwing the snake outside we made a thorough search, but found nothing. Then, still suspicious, we inspected our rifles, which had been left in the house while we were away. No harm had been done to them, nor to anything else in the place. There was no sign that any one had been there. So we said no more and went to sleep.

The next night a more violent thing came about. A heavy, solid blow struck the *barracão*, and we sprang from our hammocks to find the place shaking dangerously. A grinding, crushing sound was passing slowly along one side, and when we got a light we found the wall on that side caved in. We peered out in time to see a big tree go drifting suddenly away down-stream.

We had been unpleasantly close to death. The *barracão*, you understand, was built high on poles, just as all houses there must be built to stand above the flood waters.

The floating tree had come very near knocking it off its posts and crumpling it into a wreck from which we would have little chance of escape. Held in that sunken cage, carried away down the black waters among alligators and *piranhas* and other evil things —no, we should not have had much chance. It was our luck that the house happened to be firm and that the heavy tree had not hit it squarely.

The night was dull, but not black. We could see a short distance out across the Tecuahy, but nothing strange was in sight. We listened, but heard nothing. As on the night when we found the snake, there was no sign that it was not mere chance. Yet we were quite sure it was not chance at all, for this reason: there was little current around our house, and the drifting things that came down usually passed by at quite a distance, out where the flow was stronger. It seemed almost impossible for such a thing to happen unless a boat somewhere above us had drawn that tree aside and guided it to strike us. And, as I say, the night was not so dark but that men could do this.

"It seems to me, Lourenço," said Pedro, "that before that thing hit us I heard voices and paddles. Perhaps I was dreaming. Perhaps I was not dreaming but was partly awake and really heard it. I am not sure. But things are becoming interesting in this house."

"Quite so," I agreed. "So interesting that I am going to sit up a while and see if anything else may come."

And I did sit up, with my rifle across my lap, while my partner dozed with his own gun close at hand. But nothing at all happened before morning.

Then, after eating and loafing a while and talking over the two narrow escapes we had just had, we decided to go to Joaquim's place and ask some one in a casual way about the movements of Urubu last night. Before we started, though, I suggested that we finish up a small jug of *cachassa* which we had bought from Joaquim some days before, and which now needed refilling. He laughingly agreed that this was a happy thought, and with a mock bow to me, he lifted the vessel to his mouth.

An inch from his lips he stopped it. For an instant he held it there, peering at it. Then he lowered it, stepped to the door, and again looked sharply at the clay.

"Have you been using white powder for anything?" he asked.

"No. I have not had anything of that sort."

"Neither have I. Yet there is white powder on this jug."

It was so. On the clay was a tiny smear of white dust. We scowled at it and at each other.

"I would not drink that *cachassa*," I advised.

"I do not intend to. When did you drink last from it?"

"Yesterday afternoon. We both drank, you remember. It was good then."

"Yes, it was good then. But this is another day."

He drew back his arm to throw the jug into the water. But then he changed his mind and held it.

"On our way to Joaquim's place let us stop and see Meldo Salles," he said.

And when we got into our canoe he still held the jug. Also, we took our rifles with us.

* * *

MELDO'S house was near by, and when we stopped there we found him lazily smoking at the door.

"Meldo, you said yesterday that you had a pet monkey which was growing old and ugly and must be killed," Pedro reminded him. "You also said he was a thief and drank your *cachassa*. Have you killed him yet?"

"Ho-hum!" he yawned. "No, not yet. I thought I would do it today."

"Then let me see him drink some *cachassa* first. We have a little left here. Bring him out."

Meldo yawned again, got up sluggishly, went inside, and brought out a heavy black *barrigudo* monkey which showed its teeth and seemed sullen. When my partner lifted the jug, though, the animal chattered and reached toward it. Pedro handed it to him, and he drank greedily.

"Drink deep, you thieving *bicho*," Meldo said grimly. "It is the last drink you will get. Before night I shall knock you in the head."

"Perhaps you need not do that," said Pedro.

Then he began talking about something else, glancing now and then at the monkey, which still clutched the jug as if determined to keep it. After a time he broke off in the middle of a sentence. Following his eye, Meldo and I looked at the black *barrigudo*.

The animal was swaying on his haunches and seemed dazed. Soon he lost his hold on the jug and slumped down on the floor. After lying there a minute he kicked a couple of times and was still.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Meldo. "He is dead drunk. That rum of yours must be strong."

Without answering, Pedro pulled the monkey to him and felt for its heart. Presently he took away his hand and replied:

"You are partly right. He is not drunk, but he is dead."

Then he told Meldo of the snake and the tree. Meldo, one of the quiet men who often joined us at Joaquim's stopped yawning and became wide awake.

"A little thing like a snake on my floor does not disturb me much—I see plenty of snakes when I am in the bush," added Pedro. "And if people wish to amuse themselves by bumping trees against my *barracão* they can have their little joke. But any one who would spoil good liquor is a vile brute and should be shot."

Meldo grinned at his way of putting it, but quickly became serious again.

"Here is another thing," he said. "Helio Alves has not been seen for days. He disappeared overnight. And he had been saying ugly things about Urubu because the girl Januaria was gone."

"Do not worry about Helio," I said. "I think he is safe and will be back soon. He should have been here before now. After we see him we shall know more about what to do."

Meldo asked questions, of course, but we told him no more then, and got his promise to say nothing until we were ready. He sank the poisoned jug where it would do no harm, threw the dead monkey out into the current, and went on to Joaquim's place.

Meldo came with us, and, with a couple of other men, we got up a game at one of the tables. Our careless questions about Urubu got us no information, so we said nothing further and gave our attention to the cards. We were still playing when Helio arrived.

He came striding heavily in, looking gaunt and gloomy. One glance at his face told me what to expect. Briefly and bitterly he spoke out.

"Januaria is not at Tabatinga and has never been there. Ricardo and Alberto have not been there either. What is more, they never went down this river as Urubu said. I have spent days on my way back from Tabatinga, stopping and questioning every one between there and here. Not one person has seen or heard of them. They never left here, and that —— —— Urubu is their murderer. I am going now to cut out his foul heart."

"Wait!" called Pedro.

Then he told him what had happened since he left. To all except Meldo and me the story of the snake, the tree, and the poison was news, and they listened with faces hardening. While he talked two other men came in, and one of these was Miguel.

"But even yet we have no proof," Pedro concluded. "Urubu will say those three must have been drowned and devoured on their way to Tabatinga, and no man can prove otherwise. There is nothing at all against him except suspicion."

"Then here is another suspicion for you," Miguel broke in. "Your little friend Anna Malagueita is 'sick,' as Januaria was.

"She was not to be seen yesterday or last night. Urubu said she was sick, and at first I thought nothing of it. But late last night I grew suspicious, and this is why: Each of the girls there has a little room to herself, as you perhaps know, and the room of Anna is next to that of my girl Maria. I was with Maria last night for a while, and on my way out I went into Anna's room to ask how she felt and see whether she wished to send any further word to you. The room was empty.

"Maria had not come out yet, and I stepped back and asked her where Anna was. Maria is a jealous girl, and she asked what I cared about Anna. To tease her I said I was much interested in Anna, and a few other things of the sort. She was angered, and cried out——

" 'You are too late, Miguel *meo*—you will not see her again!'

"Then she seemed suddenly scared because she had said this, and I could not get another word from her. When we came out into the big room and found that Urubu was busy gambling she seemed much relieved. That is all."

"That is enough," growled Pedro, his face black.

Seizing his rifle, he started for the door.

"What will you do, Pedro?" Joaquim called.

"Search that whole house and find Anna. If I do not find her Urubu will tell me where she is—and I will make him tell truth."

"Bah! Who could make that creature tell truth?" snorted Joaquim. "If you want truth, do as I told you before—ask that *jacare* under the house."

Pedro swung on his heel and stared at him.

"Joaquim, you speak sense," he said. "I will talk first to the *jacare* and then to the Vulture."

We talked and agreed what we should do. Helio, Pedro and I stayed with Joaquim. The others went and got guns and long poles. When all had returned Pedro said grimly:

"Helio, do not kill him until we know. Curse him as much as you like. Keep him busy."

"I will keep him busy," Helio promised, his voice harsh with hate.

We got into our boats, and he paddled straight to the house of Urubu. The rest of us went there too; but by roundabout ways. Soon we had closed in around the place on all sides.

THE posts holding up the house were stout and high, and the water was not up to its floor. A careful look along the surface under that floor showed that no alligator was floating there.

Inside the place we could hear Helio cursing Urubu as a liar and other things far more vile, and demanding to know just what had become of Januaria. We had no time to listen for the low-spoken replies, for we now began prodding the mud with the poles we had brought.

At first we got no results, and after a time we began to think the alligator was not there now. But then Miguel's pole moved in his hand, and he passed the word that he had struck something alive. More jabbing followed. Then suddenly a rifle cracked.

It was Joaquim who slew the beast. The thing had risen near him, swimming sluggishly, and the trader had put a bullet squarely into one eye. With a rolling surge it turned belly upward.

Men got their poles under it and held it there. Pedro and I worked up beside it and slashed open its bloated belly. Then we all looked at one another with sick faces.

We knew what had become of Anna Malagueita.

Through the silence around us came the voice of Helio yelling another blast of oaths at the Vulture. Sudden fury seized us. Hoarse curses broke from us. We drove our paddles into the water and threw our canoes and ourselves around to the front of the house.

In a snarling, panting, struggling knot we leaped out on the platform and plunged through the doorway. Of the people in that big room we saw only two—Helio and the Vulture. They stood at the bar, and that bar was between them. Helio, leaning across it, had his face almost in that of Urubu, and he still spat burning curses. The Vulture's eyes were half-shut, with an evil gleam in them, and both his hands were out of sight below the wood.

Even as we charged into the place Helio lost control of himself and seized Urubu by the throat. The Vulture heaved himself backward and sidewise, trying to escape. But Helio's hold was like an iron clamp, and he throttled him and shook him as a dog would shake a rat.

Then came a swift flash of steel. Helio grunted and lost his hold. Urubu had stabbed him in the shoulder.

With the knife still in his hand the Vulture turned to leap away from us into his room. But he never reached that room. We threw ourselves headlong over the bar and fell on him. Some man cried out as the knife of Urubu bit into him, but after that thrust the Vulture stabbed no more. The weapon was knocked or wrested from him, and savage blows battered him to his knees.

Some of those blows fell on us also. Every man of us was like a maddened jaguar, thinking only of destroying him; and we struck in blind rage, so that in our struggles to get at him we got in the way of our own attack. Some one's rifle-barrel or butt hit me hard on the head, dazing me so that I staggered and had to grab the bar to keep from falling.

While I leaned there I saw Joaquim too go stumbling back, clutching an arm cut by a jabbing machete. Miguel also was out of the fight, for he was the man who had been stabbed after Helio, and now he was limping away, bending over with pain.

Then I saw the Vulture rise in the air. Pedro had dragged him up, and now he threw him over the bar into the clear space beyond. There Helio kicked him hard and then fell on him, his good hand pounding him furiously. Pedro hurled himself across the bar and jumped on him too. The rest of us stayed where we were for a few minutes, for our first hot rage was partly satisfied and we were willing to let Pedro and Helio settle their score.

Pedro had dropped his rifle in the struggle, and some other man had pulled his machete from his belt to kill Urubu with, so that also was gone. Helio carried a knife, but he did not draw it now; he wanted to wring the Vulture's neck in his hands.

Urubu fighting for his vicious life, showed desperate strength, and the three of them went rolling and tumbling about the floor, battering and clawing and tearing like fighting jungle-cats. And then came one of those freaks of fight by which a loser sometimes wins.

In a twisting, plunging scramble Pedro and Helio struck their heads together so violently that the blow partly stunned them. They did not lose their senses, but for a few seconds they lay without moving, waiting for the numbness to pass. And in that time the Vulture wrenched himself out of their clutch and reeled up to his feet.

He was a frightful-looking thing now. His clothes hung in bloody tatters. Red streams trickled from broken nose, smashed mouth, and gashes on head and body. One hand hung as if broken, and he breathed in wheezing gasps as if ribs were crushed. For an instant he stood there rocking on his heels. Then, as the men on the floor scrambled up and at him, he sprang for the door.

"Shoot him!" yelled some one, and a man beside me snatched a fallen rifle up off the floor and twitched back the hammer.

But he could not fire, for Pedro and Helio were bounding after Urubu, and a bullet would have hit them. We leaped over the bar. As we struck the floor we heard a heavy splash outside.

We reached the door before the fugitive came to the surface. Pedro and Helio were poised to leap in after him, but they waited until he reappeared so that he could not trick them by turning underwater and swimming away to one side.

But when he did break water again they did not follow him. Instead they hung there on their toes an instant, then settled back. Helio laughed harshly.

The Vulture could not swim.

He came up splashing and fighting the water with both hands. His mouth opened wide in a gulp for air. Before he got it he strangled, coughed, and went down with a bubbling gasp. Around him grew a red stain as the water washed his open wounds.

Again he came up. His face now was clay-white. From his choked throat burst a groaning cry. As one hand came out of water a gleaming thing fell from it. Other things glinted around him on the surface. The water boiled.

"Por Deos!" shouted Pedro. *"Piranhas!"*

Yes, *senhores*, the *piranhas* had found the Vulture. Just as they had seized on that hurt parrot a few days before, they now attacked the man who had thrown himself among them. Before our eyes they chopped him to death. And no man moved until the red waters had closed over his writhing face for the last time and smothered his cries forever.

THEN Pedro and Helio looked at each other. And Helio said—

"Let us have a drink."

I think we all felt the need of a drink. From the wreckage behind the bar we pulled out bottles not broken in the struggle there, and from these we gulped stiff drinks. While we did so the room filled with men who had seen or heard of the death of the Vulture and now came to learn all about it. We told them all we knew. And soon we learned other things.

"Who is in that room?" demanded a man, pointing at the door from which Urubu used to come.

I was nearest that door, and for the first time I noticed that since the fight it had been pushed almost shut. Kicking it open, I found Domengos Peixoto beyond it. He was just hiding something inside his shirt.

Jumping at him, I forced his hand out and saw he held a huge roll of milreis. I wrenched this from him and shoved him out to face the crowd.

"Old friends," he whined, cowering back, "do not be harsh with me. I have done you no harm, and I am only taking what is mine. That cursed Urubu owes me much money."

"That is our money," yelled a man. "The money he got by cheating us with cards and liquor."

"No, it is our money," cried a woman. "He robbed and cheated us girls and made us slaves."

"Hold that money, Lourenço," called Pedro, and he shouldered his way to me. Then he told the rest:

"Before any one gets this money we want the truth about Ricardo, Alberto, and Januaria. We want to know how these things were done. Domengos, and you girls too, speak out. You will profit by it."

So they spoke out. And though no one of them seemed to know all, yet each knew something, and by putting these things together and searching the room of the Vulture afterward we got the whole truth.

All those who disappeared had died by poison. The poison was that same whitish powder which we had found on our *cachassa* jug. It killed quickly, but with so little pain that the victim seemed only to fall into sudden sleep. Thus there were no cries or struggles from those who took it in their liquor, and nobody would be alarmed by any noise. Before morning Urubu could quietly carry the body to his own room, where a part of his floor could be lifted out and the murdered man or woman dropped through to the big *jacare* waiting below.

Ricardo and Alberto, though slain at different times, had both been killed for the same reason—their money. Each was a shrewd gambler and a dangerous fighter; and the Vulture, finding them hard to cheat and knowing he could not rob them alive, had robbed them dead.

The girl Januaria had been put out of the way because she knew far too much about Urubu and was likely to prove dangerous to him—indeed, she had openly threatened to tell certain things she knew. And Anna Malagueita must have died because the Vulture knew she had warned us to be on our guard.

Urubu had been behind all the attempts to kill us also, but had not himself taken a hand with the snake and the tree. He had worked through two worthless men of the town who would do anything if well paid, and who became scared and went away after the second attempt failed—we could not find them when we went looking for them, and we never saw them again. But the poisoning of our *cachassa* must have been done by Urubu himself while we were passing the evening at Joaquim's place.

If the floating tree should destroy us, you see, no trace would be left of the poisoned jug. If the tree spared us and the poison killed us there would still be no proof that he had been concerned in it, for men would know we bought our *cachassa* from Joaquim, and suspicion would be most likely to fall on the man who had sold it to us. To ruin his enemy Joaquim as well as to kill us would be much to the taste of the Vulture.

With these things settled in our minds, we settled the matter of the money. Pedro pointed out that no man could prove how much he had lost here; that the losers had had some pleasure in spending it; that we all could earn more money if we needed it, and that any attempt to divide it among us would probably lead to trouble. So he suggested that we give it all in equal shares to the girls of the house, who had been pleasant companions and who now had nothing. The men agreed. And it was done.

When the girls had come up and taken their money Pedro still held one share.

"This," he explained, "goes to the little girl who nearly came to this house but is now at the house of Joaquim. She must have money to take her home, and I intend to see that she has plenty."

After a minute of silence a whining voice asked:

"And do I get nothing at all? You promised me——"

"Be still, Domengos!" I cut in. "If we gave you what you deserve you would get only a good kicking. Yet since you have told the truth. we will give you something worth your while. It would do no good to give you money. You would only drink it up. But there is much liquor left here behind the bar, and you may have as much of it as you can carry away at one load. Now bend your back and sweat."

He did sweat. He got bags and crammed them with the strongest liquors in the place, working fast for fear we might change our minds. He loaded himself down so that he could scarcely walk, and when he carried his burden to the door he puffed and staggered and splashed sweat on the floor.

Outside he got into a *montaria* and went away. And it was a long time before any one again saw him sober.

Then, after looking at Miguel and finding that his wound was painful but not mortal, and that his girl Maria was taking good care of him, Pedro and Joaquim and I left the house which no longer was that of the Vulture and paddled back to Angela.

Into her hands Pedro put the money, telling her that now she could return to Ega or to Santarem as she pleased. But after holding it and staring at it—more money than she had seen in all her life—she passed it back to him.

"Keep it for me," she said. "I do not—I do not know that I want to go. I—I like this place better than I did."

We stared at her. She dropped her eyes and looked at the floor. Glancing at Paula, I saw a wise smile grow on her face.

"But you must go, Angela," Pedro told her. "This place is unhealthful in more ways than one. You have been here only a short time, but even now you do not look so strong as when you came. You will be much more healthy and far more happy at one of those towns on the great river."

Still she gazed at the floor. Then she looked shyly up at him and glanced quickly aside.

"Santarem and Ega are far from here," she said in a small voice. "I do not want to travel so far—alone."

He put a hand under her chin and lifted her face to his. A hot blush flamed in her cheeks, but she met his eyes steadily. When he spoke again his voice was very gentle.

"I would go down the river with you, Angela, but I am not yet ready to leave the Javary. I intend to work one more season on the *seringal* of the *coronel,* and then to go out and stay out.

"Go back to Santarem and find Vincente Honorio, my godfather. Say to him that when the next great flood rises I come back home, and that in the meantime he is to take very good care of you. Tell him that I, Pedro Andrada, have said this. Now be a good girl and do as I say, and all will be well."

She did as he said. On the next down boat she sailed away, taking with her the money he had brought her from the Vulture, the memory of all he had done for her, and his promise that in another year he would come home. And with her going Remate de Males settled back into his usual habit—waiting.

Our friends, the rubber-workers, waited for the time when they could go back to work in the swampy forests. The townsmen waited for the flood waters to ebb until they could walk about on dry land and kick the bones of the Vulture out of the street. And Pedro and I, with a new jug of *cachassa* which we knew would not be poisoned, yawned and waited for whatever might happen next.

THE PRODIGAL SON

by Ira South

DO YOU call to mind the Scriptural tale
Of the roving Prodigal Son,
How it fell he cried for his father's house
And despaired the thing he had done?
And he rose and made the old dear streams
Which marked the boundary lines
And a hillcrest broke by a thread of smoke
All well-remembered signs.

HIS peace returned as he tended the flocks
And, watching the sunlight gleam
On the salt-white stones of the homestead walls,
He forgot his broken dream.
And he had forgot when he went away,
Or had never fully known
How dear he held a girl who dwelled
By the fields where the grain was grown.

BUT Autumn wore on and Winter came,
And time was swiftly sped,
Till a wistful thought arose one day,
Desire he believed was dead.
"O mother dear, say what was done
With my old knotted staff.
Was my patched cloak burned when I returned
From off the wayside path?"

TO HEBRON came another Spring,
To the slopes of Lebanon.
Again a father's heart aggrieved,
For again he yearned a son.
This time he took no heritage—
Naught but his staff and cloak.
A bolt left drawn and he was gone
With never a farewell spoke.

FOR he that hath in his restless blood
Some ancient wandering strain
May dwell content for a season of peace,
But it will rise again.
When the camel-drivers curse and sing
Along the dusty trail,
The old-trod track will call him back
And nothing may avail.

The CAMP-FIRE
A
FREE-TO-ALL
MEETING-PLACE FOR
READERS, WRITERS
AND
ADVENTURERS

HERE'S the start of a Camp-Fire Station and Club in Winnipeg, Canada. Comrade Peterson wants any of you in or near there to get into touch with him:

Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

Mr. A. S. McNamee and the writer, both situated in Winnipeg, for how long, only Kismet knows—at least, anyhow, until the call of the wild claims us—would like to light a big Camp-Fire in this Northern Metropolis, but local advertising has not revealed any adventurers or T.T.T.'s. So if you would do us the favor to insert an invitation for a rally around the Camp-Fire to be lit and kept burning in Winnipeg, Man., in the Camp-Fire section of the next possible *Adventure* issued, we would be pleased to organize a Camp-Fire club here with all refinements and accommodations possible. This Winnipeg Camp-Fire open to active local and corresponding members. Membership fees only to cover actual expense in upkeep. Any one interested please address the undersigned.—WALTER PETERSON, 143 Kennedy St.

THE Station idea is taking hold. Slowly but surely, and it is better that way. Once more here is the explanation of the plan, and a list—larger than last time—of those who have definitely undertaken Stations:

A station may be in any shop, home or other reputable place. The only requirements are that a station shall display the regular station sign, provide a box or drawer for mail to be called for and provide and preserve a sufficiently substantial register book. When there are enough stations to warrant even a small order this office will furnish the books and signs.

No responsibility for mail is assumed by anybody; the station merely uses ordinary care. Entries in register to be confined to name or serial number, route, destination, permanent address and such other brief notes or remarks as desired; each station can impose its own limit on space to be used. Registers become permanent property of station; signs remain property of this magazine, so that if there is due cause of complaint from members a station can be discontinued by withdrawing sign.

A STATION bulletin-board is strongly to be recommended as almost necessary. On it travelers can leave tips as to conditions of trails, etc., resident members can post their names and addresses, such hospitality as they care to offer, calls for any travelers who are familiar with countries these residents once knew, calls for particular men if they happen that way, etc., notices or tips about local facilities and conditions. Letters to resident members can be posted on this bulletin-board.

Any one who wishes is a member of Camp-Fire and therefore entitled to the above station privileges. (Question of requiring identification-cards or Camp-Fire button to be decided later.) Those offering hospitality of any kind do so on their own responsibility and at their own risk and can therefore make any discriminations they see fit. Traveling members will naturally be expected to remember that they are merely guests and act accordingly.

A station may offer only the required register and mail facilities or enlarge its scope to any degree it pleases. Its possibilities as headquarters for a local club of resident Camp-Fire members is excellent.

ALABAMA—New Orleans. W. A. Bussey, St. Louis Cafe, Dauphine and St. Louis Sts.

CANADA—Vancouver, B. C. C. Plowden, B. C. Drafting & Blue Print Co.
Burlington, Ontario. Thos. Jocelyn.
Deseronto. *The Post Weekly*, Harry M. Moore.
Dunedin, P. E. Island. J. N. Berrigan.
Norwood, Manitoba. Albert Whyte, 172½ De Meurons St.
Winnipeg, Manitoba. Walter Peterson, 143 Kennedy St.

CALIFORNIA—Oakland. Lewis F. Wilson, 1036 30 St.
Lost Hills. Mr. and Mrs. M. A. Monson, care of Gen. Pet. No. 2.
San Bernardino. Mrs. R. Souter, 275 K St.
Santa Monica. Col. Wm. Strover, Westlake Military School.

CANAL ZONE—Cristobal. F. E. Stevens, Cristobal.

CUBA—Havanna. R. N. Faries, Dominquer 7 Cerro.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA—Washington. Fagan's Cigar Store, 1404 New York Ave. N. W.

INDIANA—Connersville. Norba Wm. Guerin, 112 East 18th St.

ILLINOIS—Chicago. John Bradford Main, care of The Junior Yanks, 144 S. Wabash Ave.

MAINE—Bangor. Dr. G. E. Hathorne, 70 Main St.

MASSACHUSETTS—Malden. Arthur R. Lloyd, 16 Cross St.

MICHIGAN—Marquetta. T. Mitchell, Box 864, G. P. O.

NEW JERSEY—Caldwell. Chas. A. Gerlard, P. O. Box 13.
Bayonne. J. D. Gray, 92 West 6th St.

NEW YORK—N. Y. C. Robt. V. Steele, Care of American Legion, 19 West 44 St.
Jamestown. W. E. Jones, 12 Fairview Ave.
Yonkers. A. F. Whegan, 173 Elm St.

OHIO—East Akron. Harry J. Lang, 137 South Arlington St.

OREGON—Marshfield. F. J. Webb, 200 Market Ave.

PENNSYLVANIA—Philadelphia. Wm. A. Fulmer, 252 S. 9th St.
Philadelphia. Alfred A. Krombach, 4159 N. Eighth St.

PHILIPPINE ISLANDS—Ft. Wm. McKinley, Rizal. Marc Guissard, Cpl. 10th Service Co., Signal Corps.

TEXAS—Wichita Falls. A. M. Barlow, P. O. Box 51.
Houston. M. B. Couch, Route 2. Box 189.

WASHINGTON—Republic. A. E. Beaumont, Box 283.
Ione. A. S. Albert, Albert's Billiard Hall.
Seattle. H. C. Copeland. The Western Sportsman, 83 Columbia St.

WISCONSIN—Madison. Frank Weston, Room 9, Tenny Bldg.

WE'VE made a point of keeping our Camp-Fire discussions away from religion, but since one of our "Off-the-Trail" stories brought up the subject, not of creed, dogma or sectarianism but of elemental religion, let's have this letter from one of our comrades.

Personally I'm the more inclined to make this exception because I believe that most of the present world trouble is due to too much materialism and that most of us need to look at the other side of things more than we've been doing. No, I'm not a preacher any more than Comrade Merrill is—have been to church only once in ten or twelve years—but I'm not one of the bright little fellows who think they have brains enough to prove there is no God. As a matter of fact, I think brains have much less to do with solving the problem either way than we are likely to think they have—otherwise a fellow's chance of finding God would be directly dependent upon the amount of brains he happened to have, which is unfair and impossible. My own experience has been similar to Comrade Merrill's and I dare say lots more of you are in the same boat.

No, we're not going to let Camp-Fire fall to squabbling about even elementary religion, still less about any creeds or dogmas, but I believe that what Comrade Merrill says should be said so that all of us can hear it and each fellow do his own thinking.

As to calling Edgar Young's "The Master Plotter" an Off-the-Trail story, we did so because it differs from our usual stories in that it brings up this very question of religion and because it is more psychological in nature than are most of our stories.

St. Albans, Vermont.

Why do you asterisk "The Master Plotter" by Edgar Young in August 3rd issue as "Off-the-Trail?" Sure, Mr. Man, it's very much On the Trail, the true Trail of Life experience reveals. If you don't know it, you ought to and sure will some day. Good luck to you. I'll gamble that Edgar Young has stacked up against the vicissitudes of life and profited by the lessons taught. More power to him!

I BUCKED up against "The Master Plotter" nigh two score of years, thought myself smarty enough to outwit Him, at other times strenuously endeavored to persuade myself there is no Him, but always got beautifully licked. Thought once or twice I was going to get by and deceive Him, but no use—it was only a lull before a storm and I got knocked out good and plenty. Came mighty near going over the Great Divide to get what might be coming to me there, but He knew best and gave me another chance.

About a score of years ago took a tumble to my damfoolishness and, weary of stacking up agin a losing game, was first neutral and passive, then turned to and fought with instead of against Him. Began to make good at once and have been climbing up ever since.

He is a winner, we can not deceive Him. The Master Plotter gives us a square deal every time and it's up to us to play the hand He deals for all it's worth, and believe me, it's some hand! You can use this anyway, anywhere, any time you wish.

I don't like notoriety but won't duck it if it will do any one any good.—F. O. MERRILL.

P. S. Maybe this is an "Off-the-Trail" letter but, for the love of Mike, don't size me up for a preacher. Usterbe called "Doc" and other things. —F. O. M.

CONCERNING his story in this issue a word from Arthur O. Friel and a newspaper clipping. Mr. Friel didn't mention the year of the clipping, but his letter enclosing it was dated April 23, 1920.

This story gives Lourenço and Pedro further adventures after their return to the headquarters of the Coronel. The town of Remate de Males, where these experiences take place, is a real town on the Javary, about thirty miles up from the Solimoes (Amazon), where the rubber-workers of the region gather during the high floods.

Although it really hasn't much to do with the Urubu of this tale, I'm sending along a news story in connection with it which is quite graphically told and out of the usual run of news dispatches. Maybe it's worth a "Camp-Fire" note, maybe not. Anyway, it's interesting.—ARTHUR O. FRIEL.

Here is the clipping, an interesting story on its own account, quite apart from haunting vultures.

Miami, Fla., Sept. 13—Many hours before the storm which sunk the Ward liner *Corydon* in the Bahamas channel Tuesday morning with a loss of twenty-seven lives, a vulture followed the ship and perched on her spars, while a panic-stricken crew, believing in the superstitions of the sea, were convinced that they were doomed.

Such is the story brought here by eight of the crew who were 53 hours adrift on an upturned boat, battered and bruised and without food or water.

All day Sunday as the ship pursued her way in calm seas and light winds, the great bird hovered overhead.

Sunday night and Monday the *Corydon* staggered through the smashing seas. Monday night every member of the crew was engaged in a desperate battle for life.

There was no food as the galley and provision rooms were flooded. Tuesday morning they lost control of the ship, the wireless apparatus was short-circuited and no S. O. S. calls could be sent out.

When the vessel went under, the Americans in the crew kept their heads and saved the lives of some others of the thirty-six.

"I slid against a lifeboat and clung to it when the *Corydon* listed," said one of the survivors. "The lifeboat and I shot into the sea together. Luckily it landed rightside up and I got in. All the oars were lashed to it."

Nine other men got into the lifeboat, and a few moments afterward the *Corydon* went down. Almost immediately the seas capsized the lifeboat three times, as fast as the men could dive from under it and right it again. They lashed themselves to the seats with strips of clothing.

Third Mate Mallowes told a graphic story of his battle with John Condron, a Greco-American seaman, when he became crazed by privation and fear. "I held him all of the first day and night," said Mallowes.

"He was raving crazy. He got violent and tried to draw a stiletto. I tied him to the boat then. When I became so weak I could do nothing with him and when he got a chance he threw himself overboard and was drowned."

THESE two, Wm. D. Leetch and W. C. Tuttle, stand side by side to maintain that a rabbit can take considerable punishment.

Washington, D. C.

Noticed a line from Mr. Tuttle on a rabbit not needing guts, supported by an incident relating to same. Had a similar experience with a "jack" on the head of Wind River, Wyoming, in the Spring of 1917. I have told it to many and been given the raz in each instance. Shot a large jack with a .38 caliber Colt, hitting him in the hind leg, breaking same and tearing the bottom of his stomach so that his insides pretty nearly all came out. It started off on a slow lope and one of the fellows with me caught it, kicking it on the back of the head several times to put it out of misery. Same seemed to revive it, for when laid down it jumped up and made off through the brush at a tremendous rate, squealing like a pig at ringing-time. It mounted a rise about a quarter of a mile away and disappeared, still going strong. Never saw anything like it. We followed it for some distance but lost track of it in the brush and never did find it. *Some* rabbit! Glad to hear a man whose word carries some weight put forth a tale to more than support mine.—WM. D. LEETCH.

WHEN I received the following letter from G. L. Chester it sounded as if lamona was likely to stir up quite a discussion, so I thought it might be well to start things off with scientific dope from the best authorities and their letters follow Mr. Chester's.

Visalia, Cal.

The members of the caucus have discussed nearly everything under the sun and seem to know everything, so I ask them to inform me just what drug is contained in the weed found all over California and Arizona (and probably elsewhere) known to the Spanish inhabitants as "lamona" and to the English speaking as "Dove-weed" or "Turkey Mullein." It is a low growing, semi-running plant with foliage of a peculiar gray color, growing mostly in sandy soil and bearing a very small black seed. Its medicinal peculiarity lies in its fly-repelling power. A few bunches hung near fresh meat will protect the meat from "blow-flies," while a boiled tincture is sure death to fly maggots in wounds on animals, besides being very cleansing and healing. The vines and leaves gathered in piles and then beaten to chaff with poles and scattered in water with little or no current will cause every fish in the water to come to the top, "belly up," so they may be taken by hand and eaten without consequence. This last was about the most popular method of fishing pursued by the Indians in the central valleys of California.
—G. L. CHESTER.

Department of Agriculture,
Sacramento, Cal.

Replying to your letter, I would state that the weed described in the letter of Mr. G. L. Chester, which you enclosed, is *Eremocarpus setigerus* or "Turkey Mullein." The facts as described by Mr. Chester are borne out in the testimony of various writers. In addition, the plant is a dangerous one in pastures as it has long hairs on its stems which form hair-balls in the stomachs of stock. Just what drug principle is contained I am unable to find out, but presume it is similar to that contained in the castor-oil plant and croton, to both of which it is closely related.—Department of Agriculture, by ETHELBERT JOHNSON, Technical Assistant.

United States Department of Agriculture,
Bureau of Plant Industry,
Washington, D. C.

The following account of this plant quoted from "Contributions from the U. S. National Herbarium," Vol. 7, No. 3, pp. 363-4, 1902, will give you the information desired.

"*CROTON setigerus* Hook.—*Shă'um* (Pomo)—A very low, gray weed, native to California, and popularly known as "turkey mullein." Some authors give it the technical name *Eremocarpus setigerus*. It grows abundantly in black adobe soil eveywhere throughout the open country from July to November, and is very conspicuous on account of its dainty, mat-like appearance. Its circular outlines are very prettily arranged in flat, leafy rosettes. The white bristly hairs which cover the whole plant in the greatest profusion are very characteristic, each bristle being a part of a compound hair, which radiates outward from the leaf in all directions. Both the flowers and the fruit are inconspicuous.

The shining, bean-like seeds, only a sixth of an inch long, are borne in great abundance, and in the Summer and Autumn constitute one of the favorite foods of the wild mourning dove, which flocks to localities where the plant is particularly abundant, a circumstance which the Indians take advantage of in order to kill them in large numbers for food. Turkeys feed on the seed also, and on this account, and on account of the wooly, mullein-like appearance of the leaf, the plant has been called turkey mullein.

The Indian name above given signifies "fish soaproot," for, as the name implies, the bruised leaves are used as a substitute for soaproot in the process of catching fish by stupefying or poisoning them. It is hardly inferior to soaproot for catching fish, but this use has not been known to some of the tribes, especially the Yokia and Pomo, for so long a time, having been taught to them in this instance by more southern tribes. The early Spaniards were well acquainted with the use of this plant, and therefore called it *yerba del pescado* (the fishing herb).

A recent popular name which suggests the intoxicating action of the plant is "fish locoweed."

THE plant is altogether too commonly used both by the Indians and whites for catching fish. It is used in precisely the same manner as is described under *Chlorogalum pomeridianum*. The exact cause of the stupefying or crazing effect is not known. Some Indians attribute it to the stellate hairs, which, they say, attach themselves to the eyes and gills and make them frantic. If these should become thus attached, they would undoubtedly cause great distress, but the chemical qualities of the plant may easily account for the effect. Not only is the odor very strong, but the taste is exceedingly acrid, as it is in most of the members of the spurge family to which it belongs. A cursory examination of the eyes and gills of fish caught by means of the plant would probably settle the question, for the stellate hairs are exceedingly characteristic of the plant.

The Concow are particularly acquainted with the plant, and use it for medicinal purposes as well as for catching fish. The fresh leaves are bruised and applied to the chest as a counter-irritant poultice for internal pain; a decoction of the plant, or some of the fresh leaves, is put into warm water which is used as a bath in typhoid and other fevers, and a weak decoction is taken internally as a cure for chills and fever. White people sometimes use it for the latter purpose, but so far as known it has not yet been widely used in such a way. The Yuki name is *kë-chil'wö-e-mök'*."—W. W. STOCKBERGER, Physiologist in Charge of Drug, Poisonous and Oil Plant Investigations.

ONE of our old-timers pays a fine tribute to Calamity Jane and tells us some interesting things about her. I know you'll join me in asking H. W. H. to tell us still more about those interesting times.

I read a letter in Camp-Fire about Calamity Jane. I want to say that a better-hearted woman never lived than this same Calamity Jane (true name, Jane Carey).

I WAS carrying dispatches all through the Sioux War of 1875-7, and I was Deputy U. S. Marshal in the Black Hills country for years, and I have seen most of the old-timers of that period, Calamity Jane among the rest. I have seen her dressed in men's clothes and driving a ten-mule team on the freight road from Cheyenne to Deadwood, and I have seen her dressed in silks in the dance halls of Deadwood. She used to drink some at times, and she was a sporting woman and lived a life that was all wrong. But I don't believe she ever did a dishonest act in her life.

I was in the old Bellunion Hall when Wild Bill (William Hickok) was shot and Jane was the first one to reach him and he died in her arms.

IN THE Winter of 1877 times were very hard for the men that drifted into Deadwood from the hills, and many a man whould have gone hungry if it had not been for Calamity Jane. She owned a house in Elizabethtown (the lower end of Main St., Deadwood) and furnished food and bedding for at least ten men all Winter, and I know at times there were twice that number living there. The men had to rustle their own wood and do their own cooking, but Jane furnished the house and paid the bills. She hardly ever went down to the house, but she saw that there was plenty of food for any one that was broke, and she worked all Winter in the dance halls to pay for it.

I know of a number of cases where she gave the last cent she had to help out some one in hard luck. She never was a scout, but, as I said before, I have seen her driving a ten-mule team. She used to stay in the camps in the Winter, but liked to be out in the open air in the Summer time.

She died at Tombstone, Arizona.

And my hat is off to the memory of the biggest-hearted woman that ever followed the mining camps in the early days.—H. W. H.

T. T. T. Most of us have a general idea of what that means but here comes Edgar Young with pretty full data. It is a letter he wrote to one of you in his "Ask Adventure" capacity.

Brooklyn.

Just when this expression originated would be hard to say. My knowledge of the American tropics extends back some 14 years when as a young lad. I first crossed over into old Mexico and the expression was current at that time. Men in the tropics (Americans) used the initials T. T. T. in speaking of certain types of men and only used the words Typical Tropical Tramp to explain to a newcomer when he asked what "T. T. T." meant. Possibly the expression could not be traced back to its origin, as is the case with the word "boomer" for itinerant railroader, which is in current use throughout the West and has been for twenty years.

Last Winter a T. T. T. whom I knew in Mexico, Ecuador, Panama and Costa Rica, called on me and we were talking about the origin of the expression. He is much older than I and was in Guatemala during the construction of the Northern Railroad from Puerto Barrios to the capital. According to his explanation, Ed Burke tried to organize the roaming Americans and English-speaking foreigners who traveled from job to job into a society for mutual aid. This society was called the "Typical Tropical Tramps." A lot of secret works were drawn up and a badge bearing the letters T. T. T. ordered from the U. S. Later, in a conversation with a man who was in Costa Rica in 1872 and who has a couple of immense albums of photos taken at that time, he told me that the expression was in use when he first landed in Costa Rica. Both stories are possibly true. Burke may have used the existing expression to draw up the society. Whether it is a fact or not that hundreds of men have been called T. T. T's before this time, it is true that hundreds have since been called that without having gone through any initiation ceremony.

STRANGE as it may appear, it is a complimentary title. It means that a man is an all-around good fellow who has traveled over the tropics from end to end and will share his last cent with any white man he meets up with down there. About the first question a T. T. T. asks a man when he arrives is, "How're you fixed?" On receiving an answer that the newcomer hasn't eaten lately or is short of money the T. T. T. proceeds to shell out part or all of his roll, his pie-card, digs out his best suit and gives it up or borrows one that will fit the newcomer, shares his room, introduces the *recien llegado* (newly arrived) to the bunch, vouches for him to the boss if he wants a job, and, if he doesn't want one and wants to travel to the next camp where white men work, squares him with a railroad conductor or buys him a ticket. He may never have seen the man before in his life and may never see him again. He does not expect a cent in return. He figures by the "endless chain" that some one will do the same for him some time and the chances are 100 to 1 that the man he has helped will get the opportunity to return the favor at some future time.

IT IS unbelievable that such men exist in this selfish world. They exist by the hundreds and it is only a case of going to any white camp in Central America, Mexico and the northern part of S. A. and down the West Coast into the copper and gold camps of Peru and Chile to find them. They are not very frequent on the east coast of S. A. after passing Venezuela and, although a rare T. T. T. is to be found in Brazil and Argentine, the expression is not often heard. Many of them were up the Amazon during the construction of the Madeira-Mamore when wages were $250 and room per month for either a locomotive engineer or a clerk in the office. The bunch who went were lured by the high prices paid in all lines and the adventure a job of this kind offered. This was a very unhealthy place. Many died with fever and beri-beri in 1909 and 1910, among them Ed Burke, who was acting as chief dispatcher at the time.

NOW it happens that a white man loses caste if he labors in a low capacity in Latin America. He is always employed as a boss of some kind. If he is employed as a machinist he is given a couple of yellow Indian or black West Indian helpers and he is supposed to oversee them and make them do the work. Anything that can be done by these cheaper laborers is done in this manner. A man does not lose caste for doing work they can not learn to do, such as running a locomotive or similar work, but he is not supposed to do work they can do. This may appear foolish, but it is very sensible. Long before the war a white American would not consider less than $125 and free quarters. He was a high-priced man. If this man did the work of a twenty-five cents per day native he was appearing at a disadvantage on the job. He lost the respect of his fellows and also, strange to say, the respect of the native people.

IN CONNECTION with this it is well to state that the better class in Latin America of the native people never work with their hands. They produce some fine artists, great writers, excellent politicians, many army officers, a multitude of inspired poets (no jest, this), but produce no mechanical geniuses, factory managers or other practical men. The entire bunch of Latin American countries are forced to call in foreigners to run their machinery, railroads, factories, etc. In Brazil a man capable of installing a small briquetting plant, cotton mill, or similar work, is known by the title of "Doctor." The Brazilian thinks a man capable of doing things of this kind is wonderful. He is introduced into the clubs and complimented in the daily papers. Among all the foreigners who come to Brazil an American is the most popular. Just to let it be known that a man is an American means to a Brazilian that they have a man capable of doing everything.

They themselves are wonderful in their own lines. They can tell more about coffee in one minute by pouring a teaspoonful of it on a saucer and watching the stain it makes than any American can find out in a lifetime. They know rubber through all its grades. They know many other things. They have the most wonderful country on the face of the world and the most money to spend. But a Brazilian couldn't begin to put a ribbon on a typewriter.

To a less extent this holds good through all the countries from the Rio Grande to Cape Horn. Mexico is possibly the exception. Many Mexican firemen have become engineers and many braqueros have become conductors. Also others have learned until Mexico can almost do her own work. But these have been peons who have learned. The higher caste have never tried to learn manual work of any kind and look down on a man who does it. Gradually an American begins to shun working with his hands if he has begun it when he first arrived. He figures he is as good as the better class of native people. Finally he decides he is a —— sight better than the better class and is really reckoned by them as such. It is possibly for this reason that he feels called on to help any fellow countryman who arrives broke. No, I won't say that either. It isn't that. It's just good fellowship. It's a sort of ethics that has been assumed by T. T. T's. It's the custom. Everybody does it and a man falls into the habit, I guess.

I arrived over the trail from Mexico in Guatemala City a pretty hard looking specimen. That night a man called me aside and gave me $25. His name was Shaunessy and he had arrived over the same trail a few months before. The master mechanic gave me $60 a few nights later. He wanted to give me all he had and we compromised on the $60; Ed Burke wired me $25. I went to Panama and got a chance to stake two of them in return. I hired a hack and took the best meal down to the quarantine station in Colon that ever went in the gate. Shaunessy did not arrive. He died on the trail between Guatemala and Honduras. If he had arrived in Panama I would have gone broke on him for he was a "good guy." That's the way it goes. They stake you and you stake them, or some one else and *he* stakes them "further down the creek" as the expression goes.

MOST of them are high-class men. They run from men who have managed railroads down to clerks and telegraph operators. Their feet are itchy. As a rule they do not remain very long. But they are competent and can handle the job while they do work. Ed Burke, who has been general manager of every railroad in Central America, used to blow up, hit the trail several hundred miles, and blow in looking like a vagabond on the next job. He was a wonderful man in more respects than one—could possibly be called the "King of the T. T. T." Flood was another big man of the clan. A man gave him $12 when he passed through Tehuantepec, walking to the zone. I personally know that it cost him over $2,500 to buy this same man out of jail in Panama for accidentally murdering a gambler with a tap on the temple. The gambler had a "paper," or rotten, skull.

About all that is required to be a T. T. T. is to hit a few trails and arrive at some mine or railroad job broke. They will see that you are looked after. And then you will be doing the same thing yourself. If you can't help the one who helped you, you will help some one who will and it will finally get back to him. Law of compensation. Some one started doing it years ago. I wish I knew who he was. I'd get the T. T. T's to build him a monument.

Incidentally, some of the men who first come down, "contract stiffs," speak sneeringly of the T. T. T. Many of them later hit the trail and become among the best of the "Typical Tropical Tramps." Here's to 'em! Best bunch in the world! If I wasn't sleepy I'd fan this typewriter another half hour telling you about them. —EDGAR YOUNG.

THIS will stir things up a bit. T. S. Miller, of our "A. A." department, asks us to settle this matter of the derivation of the word "gringo."

Monterey Co., Cal.

Can any reader of "Camp-Fire" furnish any information regarding the origin of the term "gringo"? Perhaps Edgar Young, whose intimacy with Mexico and Central America one envies, can add to the many curious and wild explanations of this word, which is beginning to become a bugbear to me. I can not number the verbal and written queries I have received as to the origin of this word. Perhaps it is merely the fascination of mystery. Anyway, "gringo" seems to be one of those insolvable mysteries.

ABOUT a year ago a compiler of a Latin-American dictionary, writing from Lima, sought information on this word through the "Ask Adventure" service. I was unable to give him much satisfaction. He seemed to think "gringo" originated in Africa. He wrote that, though in South America generally the word is "gringo," in Venezuela they say "gurungo," which latter he traces to the African "um-l-ungo," meaning "the white man." If that is so, "um-l-ungo" does not come from West Africa, at least I never met it there. But he speculates that "gur" signifies red: "S'il resulte que "gur" signifie "rouge" complexion sanguine, rubicund, nous durons l'explication du terme "gringo" signifie "homme rubicund," he writes.

His view is novel to me, but probably more plausible than the common belief of the Southwest as to the origin of "gringo," which, so the story runs, originated through the fact that the Englishmen began to arrive in Mexico about the time of the popularity of the song, "Green grow the rushes, o!" that the Mexicans heard this song ever on the lips of the Englishmen and took its two first words, or as they understood those words, for "gringo" as the name of the whites. An old lexicon gives the word as a Mexican term of contempt for whites, but furnishes no derivation of the word nor its relationship to contempt.—T. S. MILLER.

ANOTHER belated letter drawn at random from our cache. Written October 19, 1918, from Vancouver, B. C., its writer's address for reply was Private R. White, No. 2,768,887, Base Depot, C. E. F., Siberia. Where is he now? Back safe in his home in Labrador? I hope that at least he came through unscathed. Perhaps if he sees this he'll drop Camp-Fire a line by way of report.

I'm going after these old letters in our Camp-Fire cache. Some gain in interest by delay, but in other cases we lose by it. After this I'll try not to let them lie so long, though our Camp-Fire letters pile up so that our space can't keep up with them.

Though Camp-Fire is not a place for buying or selling, I leave in the sale offer in the following, since naturally that offer could not hold at this late day and in these high-priced times.

Vancouver, B. C.

I have been taking *Adventure* for three years now, through a newsdealer in St. Johns, N. F., the nearest large town to Labrador, where I have my home, but am now leaving for Siberia.

I NOTICED in 1st November issue, 1918, answer by R. S. Spears to question *re* "kajacks." As the Esquimaux in Labrador still use kyacks and I am somewhat familiar with them, may I offer a few details? The kyacks of Greenland, Baffin Land, Hudson Bay and Ungava Bay and Labrador are all built on similar plan, but differ in the various localities mentioned. Such differences, however, are so slight as to be apparent to experts only. Bones are only used in the frames in those places where wood is not procurable and the sealskin covering is put on in such a condition that it shrinks tightly over the frame.

In Labrador many natives now use canoe canvas instead of sealskin for a covering, owing to the fact that seals are scarcer than formerly and the skin necessary to cover a kyack will bring in the local trading stores enough returns to buy sufficient canvas and other articles as well. Sealskin, however, is considered better than canvas. In Southern Labrador the kyack is rarely seen; in the North—say from Nain north—it is seen in increasing numbers as one gets away from civilization and means of buying sailboats and motorboats. Contrary to Mr. Spears's statement, a kyack can be used safely by any white man used to canoes. It is true they are cranky boats, but I have seen quite a few white men tackle them with success, though of course it takes years to use them like the natives do.

If your correspondent who asks the questions *re* kyacks wishes to buy one, I could manage to sell him a full-sized hunting model for $150, complete with paddles, harpoon, float, bladder, etc., delivered in St. John's, N. F.—Pte. R. White.

THERE are quite a lot of us in the U. S. N., and I have no doubt some of you are pretty sure to remember this scrap on the *Chicago:*

The Receiving Station,
Philadelphia, Pa.

The last time I wrote you I had just got under way on the *Chicago* for the Republica de Colombia, which cruise never wound up until we hit Cuba, Barbadoes, Bahia, Brazil and, last but not least, the place I often read of in *Adventure*, Rio de Janeiro, and I sure got mine going over the Line. I can't remember the name of the different writers who gave us the dope on South America, but I feel a special interest in all of them now that I have been there, particularly the fellow who faked and dropped the bottle overboard en route from Barbadoes to Bahia, as I traveled that course. Coming back we stopped in at Port o' Spain, Trinidad, and I had the opportunity of going through the Leper Settlement and meeting the sisters who conduct it.

I ALSO read what some one wrote regarding the fight that was staged on one of the old sailing packets, and particularly noticed what he said about the way the cops would stop such a thing to-day. I wish you would let a little of this be published in Camp-Fire and see if any of the old gang can remember the foc's'le fight that was staged by one "Muckles" Reilly, boatswain's mate, first-class, on the U. S. S. *Chicago*. I won't say this battle lasted all day, but it was some scrap. Some of the crew, if they read it, will remember the battle, and I can produce proof in the way of photographs, which a calm, collected gob snapshotted while it was under way. I think if this gentleman had seen that battle he would appreciate that the gobs of to-day have not deteriorated or lost any of their battling ability.

Of course, some doubters will say, Where were the officers of the ship? That is a mystery, but the photos show the men going at it, stripped to the waist, with their bodies pretty well covered with gore. "Muckles" Reilly is still aboard the *Chicago* in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

James J. Burke, Cy., U. S. N.

LAST call for our annual vote by readers on the ten best stories published by our magazine during 1920. Voting is an easy matter. Any one can vote. Here are the particulars:

ALL you need to do is write the titles and authors' names of the ten stories you consider best, given in order of preference, and mail us the sheet of paper to reach us not later than December thirty-first. If you like, and as many as ten more for honorable mention. As in the past years, short stories, novelettes, novels and serials are included, poems, Camp-Fire and the other departments are barred out. The issues covered are those dated January 3, 1920, to December 18, 1920, inclusive. Serials only parts of which are contained in these issues are included.

We very sincerely want your cooperation and help in getting for *Adventure* the kind of story and the authors that a majority of our readers like best. If you know of a better way of furthering this cooperation than is the annual vote by readers, name it, for we are ready to try any legitimate plan that will help register your wishes in the making of the magazine. It's not only common sense to strive for this but it's a lot happier and more comfortable all around if people work together in friendly fashion.

WHILE the departments are excluded from the vote, we'll be more than glad to get suggestions for improving them or adding to them, but don't forget that "Letter-Friends" and "Wanted" have already been tried, and, though successful and popular, had to be given up because two or three readers abused them.

And if you have any suggestions concerning the magazine in general or any part of it, by all means send them in. I mean constructive suggestions that will definitely point out ways for improvement. Wherever we can meet your ideas we will, but remember that it is the majority whom we must please and that, while a given plan may please a minority and perhaps us here in the office, if it fails to please the majority it is not warranted.

But the only way to find out what the majority want is for the readers themselves to tell us. And you are one of the readers.

LOOKING AHEAD FOR DEMOCRACY

SUPPOSE that in *your* town such posters as the following met the citizens' eyes wherever they turned during the days just preceding an election? That's what is done in Grand Rapids, Michigan, by the local Americanization Society, 318 Shepard Bldg., Frank L. Dykema, secretary. (As you know, they actually teach practical American citizenship in the schools of Grand Rapids.)

The results of these posters and the campaign of which they are a part richly proved the practical value of the work. So would it in any other American city or town.

And isn't pretty good Americanism being taught there?

Here are the posters. The last sentence of the first poster appeared also on all the others.

Mothers and Fathers

Make the children good citizens by setting them the example of good citizenship. YOU can't neglect your duty and expect THEM to respect theirs any more than you can be dishonest and expect THEM to be honest.
Vote Aug. 31.—Am. So.

Tell the aliens to go to the Clerk of the Superior Court or to the County Clerk to take out their Citizenship papers.

Get This

IF nobody voted there would be no government. THAT'S what the anarchist wants. IF YOU don't vote Aug. 31st you are playing the anarchist's game for him.—Am.. So.

A Mother

Trains her children in honesty and fair dealing by example. A mother who fails in her duty as a citizen is not setting a good example for her children. Women, vote Aug. 31st. It's a duty.—Am. So.

Honorable Men

and women keep their engagements. EVERY citizen has an engagement with his Government on election day. KEEP yours by voting Aug. 31.—Am. So.

Vote Early Aug. 31

WHEN you meet a man or woman, look them in the eye—they'll know what you mean. IF THEY have not voted they will feel like a plugged nickel. But be right yourself. Vote early.—Am. So.

Women

Voting isn't a privilege—it is a duty that every citizen owes to every other citizen. It is your moral obligation. Vote Aug. 31.—Am. So.

Stop Thief!

Don't steal your children's liberties by failing to maintain your government. When you fail to vote you are robbing them. Be honest, vote August 31st.—Am. So.

Sure

You would fight for the United States if it were necessary, but your ballot is just as important in fighting the enemies of self-government as bullets were in war. Vote Aug. 31.—Am. So.

The Only Difference

between a man or woman who does not vote and an anarchist, is that the non-voter destroys the government more slowly than the anarchist. Don't be in the anarchist class. Vote Aug. 31.—Am. So.

Think

What it would mean to you and your children if Bolshevism won out in United States. There's only one way to beat it, and that's by Real American Citizenship. If you don't vote August 31, YOU DO VOTE for Bolshevism.—Am. So.

Space does not allow giving full details of the Grand Rapids system, but I know Mr. Dykema will be glad to give all the data he can to any good Americans who take up the work of establishing the same system in other American towns.—A. S. H.

A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF CENTRAL AMERICA

The Spring That Runs Blood—Where the Sun Rises Out of the Pacific and Sets in the Atlantic

By Edgar Young

ROUGHLY speaking, taking a bird's-eye view of the general outline of Central America, it is hard to describe. It is the lower extension of the North American continent, running in a southeasterly direction, decreasing in width down to the Republic of Panama, where it terminates in the form of a horseshoe with the heels spread wide apart and the toe of the shoe pointed north.

A portion of the Pacific Ocean south of Panama is both east and west of the Atlantic. Panama Canal Zone runs almost north and south; in fact Panama City is southeast of Colon.

The Republic of Panama, shown on a map by itself, bears a remarkable likeness to a gigantic measuring-worm headed west. From a point near the middle of the Atlantic coast of the republic the rest of the land is either south, southeast or southwest from there. Nothing could be more at variance with the facts than the current belief in the United States that this republic runs north and south and the Canal Zone runs east and west. The sun rises out of the Pacific and sets in the Atlantic to persons on the Canal Zone.

Central America is not a flat, low-lying stretch of land. It is a mountainous country with rugged mountains, some of which are capped with eternal show. The low country consists of the coastal plains, for the most part on the Atlantic side.

The height of land is nearer the Pacific side than the Atlantic, the slope dropping more abruptly to the Pacific and more gradually to the Atlantic. This is very general, for there are off-shooting spur ranges in both directions from the main backbone, some of which as in southern Guatemala and northern Honduras extend all the way to the Atlantic and in Salvador all the way to the Pacific.

This main backbone range is part of the Pan-American or Rocky-Andean chain that extends from Alaska to the extreme end of South America, finding their lowest height in Panama and their highest in certain peaks in South America. It is a fact that the mountains of Central America in prehistoric times rose to an immense height.

The general topography of the country is due to the heavier rainfall on the Atlantic than on the Pacific side when these mountains were too high to allow passage of rain-laden clouds, which is a prevailing condition in certain portions of South America today.

From undeniable indications eastern Honduras and eastern Nicaragua were formed by the filling up of the sea with material brought down from the mountains by erosion; Panama was formed by the wearing down of a chain of islands that connected the continents of North and South America; and the other republics of Costa Rica, Salvador and Guatemala by a gradual wearing down of the main backbone range and off-shooting spurs.

Examination of some of the highest hills in the coastal plains shows them to be of volcanic origin. These were islands before the sea was filled in around them. From the soil of the surrounding plain fossils of extinct sea denizens have been dug up, such as sharks' teeth measuring several inches in diameter, skeletons, etc.

The rivers as general rule empty into the Atlantic. The number and size in so small a territory is a source of surprize to a newcomer. Along the coasts, principally on the Atlantic, among the deltas of these rivers, are to be found numerous lagoons, some of which are very extensive in size. Many are barely separated from the sea and are salt or brackish, others are really lakes of fresh water lying back several miles from the sea and connected with it by a small outlet.

In the interior there are many high-lying crater lakes of various sizes and at various altitudes. The principal lake of Central America, however, in point of size, is Lake Nicaragua, or Gran Lago. This lake lies in the Pacific half of Nicaragua—an immense body of water, connected with the Atlantic by the largest and most important river of

Central America, the San Juan; and with Lake Managua, a much smaller lake lying in front of the capital, by a shallow creek, locally called Tipitapi *estero*, through which boats of very light draft have passed. The surface of these two lakes is between a hundred and twenty-five and a hundred and thirty feet above sea-level.

In point of importance the artificial lake of Gatun, made by the Americans during the construction of the Panama Canal, far excels any other. This lake, of some hundred and seventy square miles in extent and lying about eighty feet above sea-level, was formed by placing a dam between two mountains and confining the waters of the Chagres and several other small rivers. Over its surface passes an ever-increasing portion of the world's commerce, finding its way up from the sea and down again into the sea by means of huge concrete locks near both ends of the canal.

Volcanos—There are more than eighty volcanos in Central America, many of which are active, others in formation, and others extinct. The principal ones are:

Guatemala: Tucaná, Tajumulco, Santa Maria, San Pedro, Atitlán, Agua, Fuego, Acatenango, Pacaya, Suchitán.

Salvador: San Vicente, San Salvador, San Miguel, Santa Ana, Izalco, Conchagua.

Nicaragua: Cosiguina, Viejo, Telica, Momotombo, Masaya, Mambacho, Ometepe, Madera.

Costa Rica: Ravolo, Blanco, Turrialba, Orosi, Irazu.

Panama: Chiriqui.

The other smaller ones are distributed among Guatemala, Salvador, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica. Honduras is free from volcanos, and the volcanos of Panama have been extinct for untold centuries.

Rivers—The principal rivers are as follows:

Emptying into the Atlantic.

Guatemala: Motagua, Polochic, Sarstun, Umacinta.

Honduras: Chamelecon, Ulua, Lean, Aguan, Tinto, Patuca.

Nicaragua: Wanks, Grande, Bluefields, Mico, Prinzapolka, San Juan.

Costa Rica: San Carlos, Sarapiqui.

Emptying into the Pacific.

Nicaragua: Rio Grande de Tola.

Panama: Tuyra.

Between Guatemala and Salvador: Paz.

Between Salvador and Honduras: Goascoran.

Salvador: Lempa, Grande.

Honduras: Choluteca.

Lakes—The Gran Lago of Nicaragua is ninety-five miles long by thirty-five miles wide. Lake Managua is thirty miles long by fifteen wide. Their altitude above sea-level is variously stated at from one hundred twenty-eight to one hundred thirty-five. Both are navigable, but the shallow creek that connects them can be negotiated only by light-draft vessels and with some difficulty by them.

The San Juan River, the most important river of Central America, connects Lake Nicaragua with the Atlantic. A regular freight and passenger service is in operation from the Atlantic to the city of Granada on the lake. This city is connected with the Pacific by railroad which passes through the capital, Managua, and terminates at the port of Corinto.

Other principal lakes of Central America are as follows:

Guatemala: Izabal, Peten, Atitlán, Amatitlán.

Salvador: Ilopango.

Honduras: Yojoa.

Costa Rica: Sierpe, San Carlos, Manati.

Panama: Gatun.

Between Salvador and Guatemala: Guija.

Springs—There is a multitude of medicinal and thermal springs in various parts of the several countries which, with a couple of exceptions, are unexploited. They are especially numerous in the volcanic regions of Salvador, Guatemala, and Costa Rica.

However, the far-famed "Spring of Blood," or "Fuente de Sangre," is located in the Department of Gracias, in Honduras. a little to the south of the village of La Virtud. This water very closely resembles blood in color and formation. It is said to be eagerly devoured by dogs and other animals as well as by bats and vampires.

Several Americans and Europeans have tried to carry away samples to be analyzed, but on being confined the water decomposes and bursts the containers. The water is possibly formed by a combination of vegetable and mineral substances, formed either before or after it seeps into the cavern from which it issues. The superstitious inhabitants of La Virtud accept the easier hypothesis that it is blood, and human blood at that!

Seasons—It is rather hard when one first arrives in Central America to understand the seasons. The *verano*, or Summer, begins in November and ends in May. May to October the *invierno*, or Winter, is the rainy season and the coolest for that reason.

It must not be understood by this that it rains all the time. Rains fall during the rainy season at frequent intervals. For several weeks they will fall in daytime, literal downpours of almost clock-like regularity, and it will clear up at night and the stars come out. Then it will change and rain at night for several weeks and be clear in daytime.

During this rainy season the roads become quite muddy where they are unpaved, as they do in any other country. Umbrellas, rubber coats and ponchos are used to keep dry when traveling.

A great deal has been said about the rainy season in Central America. Say what you will, it is much to be preferred to the cold, rain, sleet, ice and snow of this country during Winter, especially along the north Atlantic coast.

The rainy and dry seasons are sharply divided on the Pacific slope, but on the Atlantic side it often rains during the dry season; and in places the actual dry season, as in Panama Canal Zone, consists of the months of January to April, inclusive. On an average the rainfall is about double on the Atlantic side of what it is on the Pacific, bearing a proportion of about one hundred and twenty inches to sixty, taking both coasts on an average.

Temperature—Generally speaking, the temperature drops four degrees for every one thousand feet of ascent into the highlands of all the Central American countries. A man can actually suffer from cold in the highlands of any of them.

The best climate for an American or white European is to be found at an altitude of from three thousand to four thousand five hundred feet. Above that it becomes steadily colder.

Upon the beach of the Atlantic coast a heavy sea breeze blows constantly, but in the lowlands, back in the jungle where this breeze can not come, it is very humid and warm; not so warm according to the thermometer but warm to be felt and suffered with. However, at night it drops until a man will reach for his blanket.

The hottest time of the day has probably been eighty-nine degrees and the coolest part of the night fifty-five degrees, according to a thermometer. The rainfall on a low strip along the Atlantic coast all the way from Mexico to Colombia is the worst thing to contend with on this side. But it makes ideal banana weather. One can not have everything!

The climate of the highlands is not unlike northern California's, but there is more vegetation to be seen. The temperature rarely climbs beyond eighty-four Fahrenheit and seldom drops below fifty Fahrenheit unless one is on top of some high mountain, when colder weather will be experienced.

At places strawberries may be had every day in the year.

Health—There is quite a lot of malaria to be found along the Atlantic coast and to a less degree along the lowlands of the Pacific coast, similar to that prevailing in the low bottoms of the Mississippi River, the swamps of Louisiana, eastern Texas, and other States of this country. Other diseases occur in about the same proportion as they do in this country, and the average native lives under less sanitary conditions.

The malarial germ is carried by a certain species of mosquito, the *anopheles*, a mosquito which has a couple of white spots on each wing, white bands on its legs and stands on its head when it bites. Only the female attacks man, the bill of the male being too flimsy to puncture the skin.

As soon as the female is hatched she immediately smells out the nearest human being or animal and starts to feed upon it. She must have blood before she can lay her eggs.

The *aëdes calopus*, formerly called *stegomyia fasciata*, is a species of mosquito marked upon the back with what appears to be the diagram of a jew's-harp, and with certain stripes upon its legs. They can carry yellow fever only when it exists in a district. They bite the patient and at the end of nine days they have developed the fever. Then they inject it into healthy persons whom they bite. There is very little if any yellow fever this side of Guayaquil, Ecuador, at present.

The *culex*, a black mosquito, was formerly supposed to be harmless except for the usual irritating effects of insect bites, but now it is accused of carrying the germ of elephantiasis, if not of other diseases.

There are many varieties of these three general classes to be found in the lowlands. They have been man's enemy in the tropics from time immemorial and many millions of deaths may be laid at their doors.

It is a comparatively easy matter to be rid of them and with small expense. What has been done in Panama can be done along the coasts of Central America. A book written by Le Prince and Orenstein and published by G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1916, called "Mosquito Control in Panama" tells how it was done on the Zone by the sanitary squad of the United States government.

Away from the coasts and up above an altitude of one thousand feet the mosquitoes becomes rarer and rarer. In places covering many thousand square miles they are absolutely unknown.

Other Insect Pests—The principal other pests to be found in certain districts are sand-fleas, chiggers, ticks, lice, bedbugs and gnats, all of which may be found in certain districts in the United States. The usual manner of combating sand-fleas is resorted to. The chigger will not bury under the nails of one's feet if ordinary precaution is taken to keep them clean. Ticks when found upon the body are removed by pressing a ball of wax on them; the others are combated in the usual manner.

The itching caused by many tick-bites is very annoying. There are places covered by underbrush where many may be brushed off in passing and find their way to the skin. When this land is cleared of underbrush these ticks disappear. Ammonia will allay the itching.

An occasional *alacran*, or scorpion, is to be found. Its bite is very painful, but not fatal. Now and then a centipede or tarantula is encountered. These are so rare as to be almost negligible.

House-flies, numerous other flies and bugs, insects and beetles, most of which we have a knowledge of in this country, exist in Central America.

Ordinary Precautions—Drinking-water is pure in the highlands. It should be boiled when used from swamps and low ground. In mosquito country a net should be used to sleep under at night. In the absence of having a net take two grains of quinin per day. Quinin is both a sure preventive and cure for malaria.

Wines, liquors, and beers should be used in moderation, if used at all. The low prices at which alcoholic drinks are sold has been the ruin of many a man who could not have afforded them at higher prices. Moderation in all other things is a good plan.

It is an old adage that a white man should avoid work in the tropics. During construction of the Panama Canal white men worked harder than they were accustomed to in the United States and had better health thereby.

How to Dress—All down through Central America a medium weight of American clothing is worn by Americans who are there. The ordinary Summer weights used here are quite right for the Summer season.

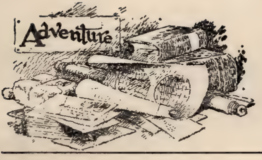
For Winter no overcoat is required as a general rule unless one is in a very high altitude when a light overcoat is very comfortable. For work there is nothing better than khaki trousers and jacket of the Norfolk pattern, and in the mountains a lightweight suit of corduroy is ideal.

Some Americans who have been for a long time in the country wear duck and linen clothing similar to that worn by the better-class natives for dress upon the streets and for social gatherings. Full dress of the pattern worn here and in Europe are the prevailing clothes for state occasions.

Hats vary all the way from sailor straws and Panamas to high silk ones. Many Americans of the younger generation wear a broad-brimmed Stetson similar to those worn by the Zone police on the Panama Canal Zone. These hats are very cool; in fact they are more of a protection than a straw or lighter hat.

Americans wear their own styles of shoes and a great many of the better-class natives do also; but some of them wear the peculiar style of footgear used in France. The ladies, both American and foreign, try to follow the latest Parisian fashions.

The lower-class men wear cotton shirt, white trousers, straw hats and sandals, while their women wear calico waists, cotton skirts, sandals, and, as a rule, no hat, but a sort of shawl in the early morning and cool of the evening.



VARIOUS PRACTICAL SERVICES FREE TO ANY READER

THESE services of *Adventure* are free to *any one.* They involve much time, work and expense on our part, but we offer them gladly and ask in return only that you *read and observe the simple rules*, thus saving needless delay and trouble for you and us. The whole spirit of this magazine is one of friendliness. No formality between editors and readers. Whenever we *can* help you we're ready and willing to try.

Identification Cards

Free to any reader. Just send us (1) your name and address (2) name and address of party to be notified, (3) a stamped and self-addressed return envelope.

Each card bears this inscription, each printed in English, French, Spanish, German, Portuguese, Dutch, Italian, Arabic, Chinese, Russian and Japanese:

"In case of death or serious emergency to bearer, address serial number of this card, care of *Adventure*, New York, stating full particulars, and friends will be notified."

In our office, under each serial number, will be registered the name of bearer and of one or two friends, with permanent address of each. No name appears on the card. Letters will be forwarded to friend, unopened by us. Names and addresses treated as confidential. We assume no other obligations. Cards not for business identification. Cards furnished free *provided stamped and addressed envelope accompanies application.* We reserve the right to use our own discretion in all matters pertaining to these cards.

Metal Cards—For twenty-five cents we will send you, *post-paid*, the same card in aluminum composition, perforated at each end. Enclose a self-addressed return envelope, but no postage. Twenty-five cents covers everything. Give same data as for pasteboard cards. Holders of pasteboard cards can be registered under both pasteboard and metal cards if desired, but old numbers can not be duplicated on metal cards. If you no longer wish your old card, destroy it carefully and notify us, to avoid confusion and possible false alarms to your friends registered under that card.

A moment's thought will show the value of this system of card-identification for any one, whether in civilization or out of it. Remember to furnish stamped and addressed envelope and to *give in full the names and addresses of self and friend or friends when applying.*

If check or money order is sent, please make it out to the Ridgway Company, *not* to any individual.

Missing Friends or Relatives

Our free service department "Lost Trails" in the pages following, though frequently used in cases where detective agencies, newspapers, and all other methods have failed, or for finding people long since dead, has located a very high percentage of those inquired for. Except in case of relatives, inquiries from one sex to the other are barred.

Back Issues of *Adventure*

The Boston Magazine Exchange, 109 *Mountfort St., Boston, Mass., can supply* Adventure *back through* 1918, *and occasional copies before that.*

WILL BUY: Back issues of *Adventure* from the beginning of 1918. State price before sending.—Address RUTH BROWN, Room 222, 30 Huntington Ave., Boston, Mass.

WILL SELL: Oct. 1913 to Mid-Dec. 1918; twenty cents each, not including postage. 1st Feb. 1918 to date; fifteen cents each, not including postage.— Address DONALD SMITH, 4219 Appleton Ave., Oakley, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Expeditions and Employment

While we should like to be of aid in these matters, experience has shown that it is not practicable.

Manuscripts

Glad to look at any manuscript. We have no "regular staff" of writers. A welcome for new writers. *It is not necessary to write asking to submit your work.*

When submitting a manuscript, if you write a letter concerning it, enclose it *with* the manuscript; do *not* send it under separate cover. Enclose stamped and addressed envelope for return. All manuscripts should be typewritten double-spaced, with wide margins, not rolled, name and address on first page. We assume no risk for manuscripts or illustrations submitted, but use all due care while they are in our hands. Payment on acceptance.

We want only clean stories. Sex, morbid, "problem," psychological and supernatural stories barred. Use almost no fact-articles. Can not furnish or suggest collaborators. Use fiction of almost any length; under 3000 welcomed.

Mail Address and Forwarding Service

This office, assuming no responsibility, will be glad to act as a forwarding address for its readers or to hold mail till called for, provided necessary postage is supplied. Unclaimed mail which we have held for a long period is listed on the last page of this issue.

Camp-Fire Buttons

To be worn on lapel of coat by members of Camp-Fire—any one belongs who wishes to. Enameled in dark colors representing earth, sea and sky, and bears the numeral 71—the sum of the letters of the word Camp-Fire valued according to position in the alphabet. Very small and inconspicuous. Designed to indicate the common interest which is the only requisite for membership in Camp-Fire and to enable members to recognize each other when they meet in far places or at home. Twenty-five cents, post-paid, anywhere.

When sending for the button enclose a strong, self-addressed, *un*stamped envelope.

If check or money order is sent, please make it out to the Ridgway Company, *not* to any individual.

General Questions from Readers

In addition to our free service department "Ask Adventure" on the pages following, *Adventure* can sometimes answer other questions within our general field. When it can, it will. Expeditions and employment excepted.

Addresses

Order of the Restless—Organizing to unite for fellowship all who feel the wanderlust. First suggested in this magazine, though having no connection with it aside from our friendly interest. Address WAYNE EBERLY, 519 Citizens Bldg., Cleveland, Ohio.

Camp-Fire—Any one belongs who wishes to.

Rifle Clubs—Address Nat. Rifle Ass'n of America, 1108 Woodward Bldg., Washington, D. C.

(See also under "Standing Information" in "Ask Adventure.")

Remember: Magazines are made up ahead of time. Allow for two or three months between sending and publication.

A Free Question and Answer Service Bureau of Information on Outdoor Life and Activities Everywhere and Upon the Various Commodities Required Therein. Conducted for *Adventure* Magazine by Our Staff of Experts.

QUESTIONS should be sent, not to this office, but direct to the expert in charge of the department in whose field it falls. So that service may be as prompt as possible, he will answer you by mail direct. But he will also send to us a copy of each question and answer, and from these we shall select those of most general interest and publish them each issue in this department, thus making it itself an exceedingly valuable standing source of practical information. Unless otherwise requested inquirer's name and town are printed with question; street numbers not given.

When you ask for *general* information on a given district or subject the expert will probably give you some valuable general pointers and refer you to books or to local or special sources of information.

Our experts will in all cases answer to the best of their ability, using their own discretion in all matters pertaining to their departments subject only to our general rules for "Ask Adventure," but neither they nor the magazine assumes any responsibility beyond the moral one of trying to do the best that is possible. These experts have been chosen by us not only for their knowledge and experience but for their integrity and reliability. We have emphatically assured each of them that his advice or information is not to be affected in any way by whether a given commodity is or is not advertised in this magazine.

1. **Service free to anybody, provided stamped and addressed envelope is enclosed. Correspondents writing to or from foreign countries will please enclose International Reply Coupons, purchasable at any post-office, and exchangeable for stamps of any country in the International Postal Union.**
2. **Send each question direct to the expert in charge of the particular department whose field covers it. He will reply by mail. Do NOT send questions to this magazine.**
3. **No reply will be made to requests for partners, for financial backing, or for chances to join expeditions. "Ask Adventure" covers business and work opportunities, but only if they are outdoor activities, and only in the way of general data and advice. It is in no sense an employment bureau.**
4. **Make your questions definite and specific. State exactly your wants, qualifications and intentions. Explain your case sufficiently to guide the expert you question.**
5. **Send no question until you have read very carefully the exact ground covered by the particular expert in whose department it seems to belong.**

1. ★ Islands and Coasts
Captain A. E. Dingle, Hamilton, Bermuda. Islands of Indian and Atlantic oceans; the Mediterranean; Cape Horn and Magellan Straits. Ports, trade, peoples, travel. (*Postage 5 cents.*)

2. The Sea Part 1
Beriah Brown, Seattle Press Club, 1309 Fifth Ave., N. E., Seattle, Wash. Covering ships, seamen and shipping; nautical history, seamanship, navigation, yachting; commercial fisheries of North America; marine bibliography of U. S.; seafaring on fishing-vessels of the North Atlantic and Pacific banks, small-boat sailing, and old-time shipping and seafaring.

3. ★ The Sea Part 2
Captain A. E. Dingle, Hamilton, Bermuda. Such questions as pertain to the sea, ships and men local to the British Empire should be sent to Captain Dingle, not Mr. Brown. (*Postage 5 cents.*)

4. Eastern U. S. Part 1
Raymond S. Spears, Little Falls, N. Y. Covering Mississippi, Ohio, Tennessee, Michigan and Hudson valleys; Great Lakes, Adirondacks, Chesapeake Bay; river, lake and road travel, game, fish and woodcraft; furs, fresh-water pearls, herbs; and their markets.

5. Eastern U. S. Part 2
Hapsburg Liebe, Orlando, Florida. Covering Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, and N. and S. Carolina, Florida and Georgia except Tennessee River and Atlantic seaboard. Hunting, fishing, camping; logging, lumbering, sawmilling, saws.

6. Eastern U. S. Part 3
Dr. G. E. Hathorne, 44 Central Street, Bangor, Maine. Covering Maine; fishing, hunting, canoeing, guides, outfits, supplies.

7. Middle Western U. S. Part 1
Joseph Mills Hanson (lately Capt. A. E. F.), care *Adventure.* Covering the Dakotas, Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas. Hunting, fishing, travel. Early history of Missouri Valley.

8. Middle Western U. S. Part 2
John B. Thompson, 906 Pontiac Bldg., Chicago, Ill. Covering Missouri, Arkansas and the Missouri Valley up to Sioux City, Iowa. Wilder countries of the Ozarks, and swamps; hunting, fishing, trapping, farming, mining and range lands; big timber sections.

9. Middle Western U. S. Part 3
Larry St. John, Melbourne Beach, Fla. Covering Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Lake Michigan. Fishing, hunting, trapping, lumbering, canoeing, camping, guides, outfits, motoring, agriculture, minerals, natural history, clamming, early history, legends.

10. Western U. S. Part 1
E. E. Harriman, 2303 W. 23d St., Los Angeles, Calif. Covering California, Oregon, Washington, Utah, Nevada, Arizona. Game, fur, fish; camp, cabin; mines, minerals; mountains.

11. Western U. S. Part 2 and Mexico Part 1 Northern
J. W. Whiteaker, 20 Ashland Blvd., Chicago, Ill. Covering Texas, Oklahoma, and the border States of old Mexico; Sonora, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo Leon and Tamaulipas. Minerals, lumbering, agriculture, travel, customs, topography, climate, natives, hunting, history. indutsries.

12. Mexico Part 2 Southern; and Lower California
C. R. Mahaffey, 381 Broadway Street, San Francisco, Cal. Covering Lower California and that part of Mexico lying south of a line drawn from Tampico to Mazatlan. Mining, agriculture, topography, travel, hunting, lumbering, history, natives, commerce, business and general conditions.

★(*Enclose addressed envelope with* 5 *cents in stamps NOT attached*)

†*Return postage not required from U. S. or Canadian soldiers, sailors or marines in service outside the U. S., its possessions, or Canada.*

13. ★ North American Snow Countries Part 1
S. E. Sangster ("Canuck"), L. B. 393, Ottawa, Canada. Covering Height of Land and northern parts of Quebec and Ontario (except strip between Minn. and C. P. R'y); southeastern parts of Ungava and Keewatin. Trips for sport, canoe routes, big game, fish, fur; equipment; Summer, Autumn and Winter outfits; Indian life and habits; Hudson's Bay Co. posts; minerals, timber; customs regulations. No questions answered on trapping for profit.

14. North American Snow Countries Part 2
Harry M. Moore, Deseronto, Ont., Canada. Covering southeastern Ontario and the Ottawa Valley. Fishing, hunting, canoeing, mining, lumbering, agriculture, topography, travel, camping, aviation.

15. ★ North American Snow Countries Part 3
George L. Catton, Tweed, Ont., Canada. Covering Southern Ontario and Georgian Bay. Fishing, hunting, trapping, canoeing.

16. North American Snow Countries Part 4
Ed. L. Carson, Burlington, Wash. Covering Yukon, British Columbia and Alberta including Peace River district; to Great Slave Lake. Outfits and equipment, guides, big game, minerals, forest, prairie; travel; customs regulations.

17. North American Snow Countries Part 5
Theodore S. Solomons, 2837 Fulton St., Berkeley, Calif. Covering Alaska. Arctic life and travel; boats, packing, back-packing, traction, transport, routes; equipment, clothing, food; physics, hygiene; mountain work.

18. North American Snow Countries Part 6
Reece H. Hague, The Pas, Manitoba, Canada. Covering Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Mackenzie and Northern Keewatin. Homesteading, mining, hunting, trapping, lumbering and travel.

19. North American Snow Countries Part 7
Jas. F. B. Belford, Richmond, Quebec. Covering New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and southeastern Quebec. Hunting, fishing, lumbering, camping, trapping, auto and canoe trips, history, topography, farming, homesteading, mining, paper and wood-pulp industries, land grants, water-power.

20. Hawaiian Islands and China
F. J. Halton, 632 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago, Ill. Covering customs, travel, natural history, resources, agriculture, fishing, hunting.

21. Central America
Edgar Young, care *Adventure* magazine, Spring and Macdougal Sts., New York, N. Y. Covering Canal Zone, Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, British Honduras, Salvador, Guatemala. Travel, customs, language, game, local conditions, minerals, trading.

22. South America Part 1
Edgar Young, care *Adventure* magazine, Spring and Macdougal Sts., New York, N. Y. Covering Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Chile; geography, inhabitants, history, industries, topography, minerals, game, languages, customs.

23. South America Part 2
P. H. Goldsmith, *Inter-American Magazine*, 407 West 117th St., New York, N. Y. Covering Venezuela, the Guianas, Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay and Argentine Republic. Travel, history, customs, industries, topography, natives, languages, hunting and fishing.

24. Asia, Southern
Gordon McCreagh, 21 East 14th St., New York City. Covering Red Sea, Persian Gulf, India, Tibet, Burma, western China, Siam, Andamans, Malay States, Borneo, the Treaty Ports; hunting, trading, traveling.

25. Philippine Islands
Buck Connor, Box 807A, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, N. M. Covering history, natives, topography, customs, travel, hunting, fishing, minerals, agriculture, exports and imports, manufacturing.

26. Japan
Grace P. T. Knudson, Castine, Maine. Covering Japan; commerce, politics, people, customs, history, geography, travel, agriculture, art, curios.

27. Russia and Eastern Siberia
Major A. M. Lochwitzky (formerly Lieut.-Col. I. R. A.; Ret.), Austin, Texas. Covering Petrograd and its province; Finland, northern Caucasus; Primorsk District, Island of Sakhalien; travel, hunting, fishing, explorations among native tribes; markets, trade, curios.

28. Africa Part 1
Thomas S. Miller, Carmel, Monterey Co., Calif. Covering the Gold, Ivory and Fever Coasts of West Africa, the Niger River from the delta to Jebba, Northern Nigeria. Canoeing, labor, trails, trade, expenses, outfitting, flora; tribal histories, witchcraft, savagery.

29. Africa Part 2
George E. Holt, Frederick, Md. Covering Morocco; travel, tribes, customs, history, topography, trade.

30. ★ Africa Part 3. Portuguese East Africa
R. W. Waring, Corunna, Ontario, Canada. Covering trade, produce, climate, opportunities, game, wild life, travel, expenses, outfits, health, etc.

31. ★ Africa Part 4. Transvaal, N. W. and Southern Rhodesia, British East Africa, Uganda and the Upper Congo
Charles Beadle, Care Society of Authors and Composers, Central Building, Tothill St., Westminster, London, England. Covering geography, hunting, equipment, trading, climate, mining, transport, customs, living conditions, witchcraft, opportunities for adventure and sport. (*Postage 5 cents.*)

32. ★ New Zealand and the South Sea Islands
Tom L. Mills, *The Feilding Star*, Feilding, New Zealand. Covering New Zealand, Cook Islands and Samoa. Travel, history, customs; opportunities for adventurers, explorers and sportsmen. (*Postage 8 cents.*)

33. ★ Australia and Tasmania
Albert Goldie, Hotel Sydney, Sydney, Australia. Covering customs, resources, travel, hunting, sports, politics, history. (*Postage 5 cents.*)

FIREARMS, PAST AND PRESENT

Rifles, shotguns, pistols, revolvers and ammunition. (Any questions on the arms adapted to a particular locality should *not* be sent to this department but to the "Ask Adventure" editor covering the district in question.)

A.—All Shotguns (including foreign and American makes). J. B. Thompson, 906 Pontiac Bldg., Chicago, Ill.

B.—All Rifles, Pistols and Revolvers (including foreign and American makes). D. Wiggins, Salem, Ore.

FISHING IN NORTH AMERICA

Salt and Fresh Water Fishing

J. B. Thompson, 906 Pontiac Bldg, Chicago., Ill. Covering fishing-tackle and equipment; fly and bait casting; live bait; camping outfits; fishing trips.

STANDING INFORMATION

For general information on U. S. and its possessions, write Sup't of Public Documents, Wash., D. C., for catalog of all government publications.

For the Philippines and Porto Rico, the Bureau of Insular Affairs, War Dep't, Wash., D. C.

For Alaska, the Alaska Bureau, Chamber of Commerce, Central Bldg., Seattle, Wash.

For Hawaii, Hawaii Promotion Committee, Chamber of Commerce, Honolulu, T. H. Also, Dep't of the Interior, Wash., D. C.

For Cuba, Bureau of Information, Dep't of Agri., Com., and Labor, Havana, Cuba.

The Pan-American Union may be called upon for general information relating to Latin-American matters or for specific data. Address John Barrett, Dir. Gen., Wash., D. C.

For R. N. W. M. P., Commissioner Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Ottawa, Can. Only unmarried British subjects, age 18 to 40, above 5 ft. 8 in. and under 175 lbs., accepted.

For Canal Zone, the Panama Canal Commission, Wash., D. C.

For U. S., its possessions and most foreign countries, the Dep't of Com., Wash., D. C.

★ *(Enclose addressed envelope with 5 cents—in Mr. Mills' case 8 cents—in stamps NOT attached)*

Tiger-Hunting

ALL you need to bag one of the big cats is nerve and the right gun and nerve and a good eye and nerve. Oh, yes; and a tiger:

Question:—"Will you kindly give me some information on tiger-hunting? Where is a good place to go, and what type of gun is best? Is it very expensive?

I have heard that there are black and white varieties of the tiger; if there are kindly tell me where they are found and their size compared with the ordinary tiger."—Ralph Robinson, Indianapolis, Ind.

Answer, by Mr. McCreagh:—When you ask what kind of gun is best for tiger-hunting I am afraid to answer you. I have heard hunters of all sorts and ages and colors argue and fight with each other over just this question. All I dare do is is give you some general dope, and let you pick your gun accordingly.

The tiger, being a soft-skinned animal, doesn't require the tremendous penetrating quality in a bullet that some of the big ungulates do. Further, being of a frightfully diabolic vitality, they need something that will knock them endways right when they are hit and not ten minutes after. All this would point to the choice of a big heavy bullet with a soft nose which will mushroom without fear of passing right through.

One of the best tiger-hunters I ever knew, the late Rajah Nipendra Nath Bhup of Koocjoehar, carried a twelve-gage shot-and-ball gun, a Paradox; and he shot anything from pheasant to rhinoceros with it.

On the other hand I have seen a well-known tiger-hunter sit up and swear by a .303 with a soft-nose bullet.

Personally my experience has been with a Ross .280 carrying a copper tube expanding bullet of 145 grains. I am sorry to say that, while I have spent many weary hours trying to bag a tiger, it has never been my luck to get one; but I have tried out this armament on other soft-skinned game, such as leopard, and can guarantee that if you hit your beast it curls right up.

One point I would lay particular emphasis upon; and that is the necessity for a wide-open sight; for you will never need to take a long accurate shot at a tiger; you are more likely to get your chance at very short range and shooting at snap speed. There will never be time for fine sighting, or need—in the native jungles of the beast—for distant sighting.

As to location: the absolutely best place I know is Upper Burma. India is pretty well worked out. I don't mean for a moment that there aren't any more tigers; there are heaps of them. But India has acquired the name for a tiger-hunting country and the competition there is with the rich sport, the guest of some high official. In Burma the ordinary poor man can go out with his rifle—and his nerve; don't by any means forget his nerve—and shoot tiger for no more cost than the price of getting there. I've known a man to step out on to his veranda one fine morning and then suddenly rush back into the house for his gun; and right from his front porch pick off a tiger two hundred yards away on the hillside. Just my luck again that he got up first.

I've seen myself and three other men come round the bend of a mountain road in a *tonga* (sort of fool-proof coach) and wake up a tiger sleeping in the dust in the sunlight. Of course, all our guns were tucked under our feet so the darn conveyance wouldn't jolt them over the cliffs; and the tiger just woofed and leaped away before anybody could get a shot. All in Upper Burma.

I have never heard anything about black and white tigers, though I can quite willingly believe in a freak specimen or two turning up every now and then.

I'm nearly forgetting about cost. A rifle such as the Ross costs about $60. Though, mind, I am not especially recommending this. Were I going out again, I would consider very carefully one or two others, for instance the Savage and the Westley-Richards.

For about four hundred dollars you can step off the train right in the middle of tiger country in the Chindwin or the Katha section of Upper Burma.

If you go, I wish you luck; and—don't let the natives singe the whiskers or steal the claws of all your trophies.

Quechua, Aymara and Guarani

LOOKS as if there's a chance here for some lingo-hound to make a big name for himself in a branch of philology that doesn't seem to have been worked much yet:

Question:—"I am interested in the South American languages but as yet have had no way in which to study them.

Can you tell me where I can get books necessary to study the lesser spoken languages of South America; or have they been put in printed form?

Please give me some words in the different languages in your field, so that I can contrast them. I understand Spanish already; the uncommon languages are the ones in which I'm interested."—Emmett W. Baker, Paducah, Ky.

Answer, by Mr. Goldsmith:—As you are doubtless aware, there are many Indian languages in South America. The three that have been most studied and written about are, I think, Quechua, Aymara and Guaraní. Efforts have been made to study the grammar and construction of these languages, and some books have been published upon them in Lima, Quito, Buenos Aires and Asunción.

I know of nothing in the way of grammar that you can secure in this country. Doctor Julio Tellio, Lima, Perú, might secure for you some of the works that have been published in Lima on Quechua and Aymara. You would have to write to him and see if he would undertake to make the purchase for you, and then send him the money.

The books on Guaraní could be secured in Asunción. If you are interested in them, you might write to his Excellency Sr. Manuel Gondra, President of Paraguay, Gaboto, 401, Asunción (all letters to South America should bear a five-cent stamp). Sr. Gondra is one of the greatest living authorities on the Guaraní language.

I have before me a Spanish-Aymara dictionary and a Spanish-Quechua dictionary. Unfortunately these dictionaries were made up wrongly. Instead of putting the Quechua and Aymara words first and then defining them in Spanish terms, the Spanish words have been put first and they have been defined in Quechua and Aymara terms. This is of course wholly improper and renders the work of the student very difficult.

I place below a few words:

ENGLISH	QUECHUA	AYMARA
man	ccari, runa	chacha
woman	huarmi	uarmi
boy	huarma	yoccalla
girl	huarma	uauanaca
tree	sachha	ali
dog	allcco	orcco anu
see	ricuy	unjaña
eat	micjuy	mankacaña
speak	rimay	parlaña
run	phahuay	jaltaña
die	huañuy	jiuaña
good	allin	suma
bad (man)	mana allin runa	supai jaqque
bad (thing)	mana allin	ñancca
white	yurak	jankco
black	yana	cchiara
over	hahua	pata
under	uray	aynachata
in	. . .pi (suffix)	cuna
out	hahua	ancca

To give you an idea of Guaraní, here is the Lord's Prayer in that language:

Ore Rú reiméva yvape.
Toñembueté Nde réra.
Toñemoingó pe teco marangatu reñombotuvicha guasu jaguâme.
Toyeyapó jecópe co Ne rembipota, upe yvapeguaicha, upeicha avei co yby ar.
Co ore rembiurâ ameêna oreve angué voí tapiaguaichante.
Ja ejeyá reí oreve ore romoñemyrô jague Ndeve, upe ore rojeya reí jaicha ore avei umi ore moñemyrô vaecue orevepe.
Ja ani remoingue rei ore pya raâ jaguâme, ore mboínte pe mbae ivaíva.

Shanghai

HERE are some interesting facts about China's most American city—and especially about its curious currency system:

Question:—"Can you tell me something of the climate, living conditions, sports and currency of Shanghai, with any other information that you may think of value?"—HARRY S. POTTER, Cumberland, Md.

Answer, by Mr. Halton:—Shanghai climate varies from a minimum in Winter of 10 deg. F. to 103 deg. maximum in Summer with an average of 59 deg. This record covers a period of ten years. The average rainfall per year is 45.70 inches.

With the gold dollar at depreciated value in Chinese currency, the cost of living for household necessities is slightly higher than it would be here, but taking into account the fact that labor is cheaper it is safe to estimate the living costs at Shanghai at the present time at about equal to those of this country.

Good hunting and fishing can be had within easy reach of Shanghai. You will find that the various nationalities engage in the popular sports of their own countries. Americans, of course, play baseball, while the Britishers indulge in cricket.

The currency question is quite a complicated affair at the present time. The actual currency in circulation at Shanghai is the Mexican silver dollar. The Shanghai tael, however, is the unit of currency in transactions for both native and foreign merchants, especially in the districts bordering Shanghai, because it is generally known among foreign business men in China.

The value of taels in the different provinces varies considerably. In some cases even individual towns have a currency of different value. A tael is a unit of weight—not a coin. Prior to the war the Shanghai tael was worth $1.0832. In the same ratio, the Mexican dollar was worth $0.7857. As this is written, the Mexican dollar exchanges for $1.10 U. S. gold, whereas four years ago it was only worth 43 cents.

Shanghai itself is governed by an international council comprising nine members of various nationalities, elected annually by the rate-payers. These members are chosen from among the most prominent business men of Shanghai and give their services free.

There are four American banks having branches in Shanghai. We have an American Chamber of Commerce at Shanghai. The American residents number 1720; Europeans, 11,876. The total population of Shanghai is 1,200,000.

In all respects Shanghai is a modern, up-to-date city with postal, telegraph, street-car, water, light and other facilities.

Put at least five cents postage on all letters addressed to Ask *Adventure* editors who live outside the U. S. Always enclose at least five cents in International Reply Coupons for answer.

Finding a Ship's Position

NOTHING much that's new here, perhaps, for us coast-dwellers; but there may be something of interest in it for the fellow whose idea of a hurricane deck is the back of a bronc:

Question:—"I have read *Adventure* for some time and like the sea-stories very much but in some of them some parts are hard for me to understand. So I am going to trouble you for some information.

I would like to get information as to finding your position at sea—taking observations, etc.

I would also like to get some information about sailing vessels; that is, the way of sailing them. I never could understand how a ship could sail into the wind when it is relying on the wind for propulsion."—PERRY MORRISON, Oil City, Pa.

Answer, by Mr. Brown:—A ship's position at sea is found by observation for latitude and longitude roughly as follows: Through a sextant the height of the sun above the horizon is found at noon, the point when the sun is highest. To the height as shown by the instrument, certain corrections are made, through which the true altitude is found. To this another correction, that for declination (the sun's distance north or south of the equator) is applied. Subtracting this final result from 90 degrees gives the latitude at the time of the observation.

From another sextant observation of the sun's altitude, taken earlier or later in the day, when it is nearer the horizon, the exact local time is found, by medium of a simple equation. The ship's chronometer gives the Greenwich time. The difference between the local time as found by the observation and Greenwich time at the instant of observation, gives the time interval from which to determine the longitude. There are numerous other observations of the sun, moon and certain of the stars, but these are the simplest and those most generally used by merchant-marine navigators.

A ship does not sail into the wind. She simply sails as close to the wind as she can and keep her sails full and drawing. This is approximately six points from the wind by the compass, or 67½ degrees. After sailing a certain distance, she "tacks" and sails for a time a course 67½ degrees the other side of the wind. By a series of tacks like this she gradually works her way in the direction whence the wind blows. This is called "beating to windward." The course is a series of zigzags.

Smokeless for Cap and Ball

BETTER use black powder in weapons designed to burn black powder—a remark which may not be so obvious as it would appear at first seeming:

Question:—"Would like to know some time a good and safe smokeless powder to use in cap-and-ball revolver."—E. B. Darnielle, Gardena, Idaho.

Answer, by Mr. Wiggins:—I would like to know what you wish to shoot the smokeless powder in, in the cap-and-ball line.

You know that black-powder primers or caps will not ignite the smokeless powders, as it takes a very strong fulminate to do that. And as the old revolvers are made of very soft material, you would be running a big risk in doing any experimenting with the modern powders. I would advise you to stick to the old black powder, using a greased wad between the powder and the bullet, and you will not be badly troubled with fouling.

Tips on the Philippines

SHOOTING 'gators with a one-pounder Hotchkiss shouldn't be such bad sport at that:

Question:—"I am taking the liberty of asking you a few things about the Philippines. I expect shortly to go as skipper of an ocean-going tug to the Philippines where the tug will be used to tow barges of lumber from some place about 350 miles away to Manila. Will have short lay-offs at each end of run.

Is there any hunting? If so what would you recommend for armament? I have used a 30-30 high-power rifle slightly, but down in South American jungle country found natives used carbine mostly, on account of not being able to get any long shots anyway.

I will be the only white man aboard the ship—native mates, engineers and crew. I don't ordinarily pack a gun, but I have been advised that the Filipinos are treacherous. I have dealt with kanakas and Samoans and found them always trustworthy; would you think it advisable to carry a pistol?

The reason given by my prospective employers for wanting a man is that the Philippine government has passed a law that all captains of steamers running coastwise there must hold masters' licenses. Now that sounds like bull to me, for if the islands are part of the U. S., the usual rules of the steamboat inspectors should have been in force right along, and even if it had been lax, it would be up to the Supervising Steamboat Inspector in Washington to decide when to tighten up on requirements and not any local government. Can you give me any light on this?

I have a few thousand dollars saved up. Can you suggest any side line that would be profitable, trading with the natives? I don't mean gun-running or dope."—— ——, Brooklyn, N. Y.

Answer, by Mr. Connor:—1. Relative to hunting. There is some hunting—deer of the puny specimens, some tropical birds, and that about spells the list.

2. Your 30-30 rifle would be ample for all the hunting you would get there—wild boars can be killed with a six-shooter—they are the most common game. In Samar Island I have shot the golden-backed alligators with the Hotchkiss one-pounder deck-mount navy gun—sometimes we saw the effects, but mostly they just slipped down the bank into the river and were carried away in the muddy waters of the Catubig River. But I think your 30-30 will be sufficient. You will, however, have to get permit to carry or have same in your possession in the Philippines.

3. The Filipinos are not so treacherous. They were at the time of our occupation, but that was due to the preceding reign of Spanish terror throughout the islands. We have educated them; and now they are a thriving race that flaunts the miracle of new colonization in the face of England, who has been centuries at the business of subjugating barbarous races to civilization.

4. It is well to remember, relative to your question concerning the master and marine law, that 'most everything in the islands is fashioned after our own laws. Which brings the latter part of your question to par—they should have been in force years ago excepting possibly when such as *lorchas* (a type of two-masted schooner of about 40 tons) is concerned. Suppose you inquire of the Chief Inspector, Washington, D. C.—he has the dope on it.

5. As to investments, I am not sure if pina cloth—a coconut fabric—would be profitable or not. It is light and does not require much space as a side line like hemp or other Philippine products would.

I would advise that you wait until you arrive at Manila before you plan on anything save getting acclimated and acquainted with the country. I do think, however, that you will like the country, especially when you compare it with South America. I would give my thoughts mostly to the southern portion of the group—Jolo of the Sulu groups, Mindanao and even farther south to the Sandakan of the North Borneo British, and Palawan with its great unknown resources. This is the penal island and you may have to get a permit to land on it. Puerto Princesses is the port of entry.

Anticosti and Labrador

CHILL and bleak though it may be in the cold months, Labrador is sure the good word for Summer. Seems funny, though, the first time you're up there, to be reading the paper outdoors at nine o'clock P. M. or after, and then maybe wake up at half-past three in the morning to find it's broad day:

Question:—"Please send to me the most complete information you can on the natural resources and the opportunities for camping and fishing and modes of travel on Anticosti Island and the north shore of the St. Lawrence east of the Saguenay River."—C. B. TAVENNER, Paeonian Springs, Va.

Answer, by Mr. Belford:—Anticosti is a privately owned island, the proprietor of which is Meunier, of chocholate fame, resident in Paris. Modes of communication on the island and along the eastern part of the north shore are confined to water routes in Summer and dog-teams in the Winter. Many Summer resorts are found on the north shore, reached by steamer from Montreal or Quebec.

The fishing is of the best, and I should say the best way to make the trip would be to secure a guide, with boat and supplies at Tadousac—reached by steamer—and then cruise the north shore. It would be difficult to cover the distance in one season.

East of Anticosti the Canadian Labrador will well repay a visit. Salmon and trout swarm in the rivers, sea fish of most kinds are plentiful, the scenery is wild and bleak, but magnificent, the Summer climate cool. The people in themselves are worth a visit. Mode of travel either boat or dog-team according to season. If one has the time there is no finer Summer cruise.

The north shore will repay the traveler much better than Anticosti, the Labrador most of all.

As to natural resources: pulp-wood, fish, furs. Clarke City is a paper town reached only by water. On a cruise one can depend on fish, and game can be had.

Hunting and fishing permits are necessary, and are to be obtained from the Inspector of Fisheries and Game, Quebec City. A copy of "Hunting and Fishing" containing full information will be sent you on application to Mr. E. D. T. Chambers, Government Buildings, Quebec City.

LOST TRAILS

NOTE—We offer this department of the "Camp-Fire" free of charge to those of our readers who wish to get in touch again with old friends or acquaintances from whom the years have separated them. For the benefit of the friend you seek, *give your own name if possible.* All inquiries along this line, unless containing contrary instructions, will be considered as intended for publication in full with inquirer's name, in this department, at our discretion. We reserve the right in case inquirer refuses his name, to substitute any numbers or other names, to reject any item that seems to us unsuitable, and to use our discretion in all matters pertaining to this department. Give also your own full address. We will, however, forward mail through this office, assuming no responsibility therefor. We have arranged with the Montreal *Star* to give additional publication in their "Missing Relative Column," weekly and daily editions, to any of our inquiries for persons last heard of in Canada. Except in case of relatives, inquiries from one sex to the other are barred.

COHEN, JACOB. Fifty-two years of age, black curly hair. Tailor by trade. Last heard from was in Montreal, Canada, and is supposed to be in Australia at present. Any information will be appreciated by his son.—Address S. M. COHEN, care of The Rockledge Mills, 239 Fourth Ave., N. Y. City.

BAKER, WM. Write your friend. Very anxious to hear from you.—Address HERSCHEL G. AX, 2410 N. Gale St., Indianapolis, Ind.

Please notify us at once when you have found your man.

PARKER, CARL M. Left Johnstown, Pa., about 1909. Last heard of from Arlington, Oregon in 1914. Had been in Alaska. Sister wants to know his whereabouts.—Address L. P. HOFFMAN, 5661 Broadway, Oakland, Cal.

CAMPBELL. Age about thirty-five. Trail-hitter and prospector. Saw you last in San Jose, Costa Rica after Acostas revolution, and would like to communicate with you.—Address WM. E. HEWITT, 210 Porter St., San Antonio, Texas.

FARRELL, HOWARD, "DUKE." From Bar Harbor. One time Revenue Agent in Porto Rico. Would like to hear from you Howard.—Address H. M. TROTT, R. F. D. No. 21, Winthrop, Me.

CANTERO, MARCELO A. VINCENTE or RENULFO E. Brothers. Please write to me.—Address HECTOR N. CANTERO, 1518 W. Haggard St., Phila., Pa.

WILSON, EARL D. Discharged from overseas service about July, 1919. Last heard of at Corcoran, Cal. Please write you sister.—Address MRS. E. R. COUTTS, Box A, Acton, Cal.

BRAGG, WILLIAM H. Age forty-three, blond' hair. Last heard from in Ely, Nevada 'four years' ago. Mother and sister would like to hear from him.—Address MRS. LAURA CAREY, 610 So. 14th St., Boise, Idaho.

Inquiries will be printed three times, then taken out. In the first February issue all unfound names asked for during the past two years will be reprinted alphabetically.

WEEKES, GEORGE LEWIS or EDDIE LEWIS. Song writer, composer and musical director, Imperial concert orchestra of New York City. Last heard of at La Fayetteville, North Carolina. En route with Gus Hill's minstrels, of which Co. he was musical director in 1918. If he will get in touch with me I will try and repay him dollar for dollar, cent for cent which I obtained from him on the night the show left town. I am now in a position to pay him in full. Please answer so I can set myself right.—Address THOS. BRANDT, 4496 St., West Hoboken, N. J.

MACKENZIE, WILLIAM J. Kindly return home. EMMA AND S. MACKENZIE.

MEYERS, O. H. Last heard of in Fort Worth, Texas, on his way to Oklahoma oil-fields in company with Victor Jay. Would be glad to hear from either one. Any information will be appreciated.—Address FRANK L. KITCHENER, care of Pack Train 13 Q. M. C. U. S. A. Marfa, Texas.

JACK. Lost your address. Can't locate you through Sgt. P. at J. B. Write me at Bainbridge, Ind. FONTES.

LOONIE. Write me at my home address, giving some idea where you will be for the next six months.—Address G. R. MAC.

THE following have been inquired for in either the First December or Mid-December issues of Adventure. They can get the name of the inquirer from this magazine:

AUSTIN, L. C.; Behrens, E. A.; Claiborne, Harry E.; Clementson, Anton; Coombs, Peggie; Davis, Sgt. Wm.; Dorais, A. R.; Dutch, Mack; Ed Bonny or Red; Everding, Alfred; Ferris, John and James; Fitch, Leslie H.; Gardner, James E.; Giseler, Barney; Hall, Charles and Henrietta; Hammer, or Hamner, Lulu V.; Hurley, James; Johnson, Louis; Keith, Joyce; LaVelle, Miss Billie or Beatrice; Lawton, James; Linn, Cyrus H.; Mack; Miller, Orville, Edward; Miller, Peter; Mills, Lynden; Morre, William; Morris, William Jr.; Newland, John Wesley; Perkins, Chas.; Phillips Duke and Kaddie; Russell, William Thomas; St. Amond, Marcel; Schreiber, Carl; Storey, Albert; Turner, William; Wheeler, Bill; Yauker, Miss Maude.

MISCELLANEOUS: Any one who served with D. 2. F. A. in Philippines in 1911; McConologue, Corporal James or any men of Co. C. 5th Field Signal Bn.; Parents of baby girl—Name may be Haven—Relatives of Mary McAulay.

MANUSCRIPTS UNCLAIMED

HASTLAR GAL BREATH: Ruth Gilfillan; Jack P. Robinson; Ray Ozmer; Miss Jimmie Banks; O. B. Franklin; Byron Chisholm; Wm. S. Hilles; A. B. Paradis; G. E. Hungerford; E. E. S. Atkins; E. Murphy; A. Gaylord; E. J. Moran; F. S. Emerson; H. E. Warner; L. E. Patten; T. T. Bennett; Sinn Cardie; James Mosse; C. E. Wilson; R. W. Kimsey.

UNCLAIMED mail is held by Adventure for the following persons, who may obtain it by sending us present address and proof of identity:

BEATON, SGT. MAJOR G. M.; Benson, Edwin Worth; Bertsch, Elizabeth; Bonner, Major J. S.; Mrs. Brownell; Carpenter, Capt. Robert S.; "Chink"; Coles, Bobby; Cook, Elliot D.; Cook, William N.; Cosby, Arthur F.; Crashley, Wm. T.; Eager, Paul Roman; Erwin, Phil; Fairfax, Boyd; Fisher, Edward E.; Fisher, Sgt. R.; Garson, Ed.; Green, Billy; Green W.; Hale, Robert E.; Harris, Walter J.; Hart, Jack; Hoffman. J. M.; Hughes, Frank E.; Hunt, Daniel O'Connell; Jackson, Robert R.; Kohlhammer, Jack; Kuckaby, William Francis; Kuhn, Edward; Kutcher, Sgt. Harry; Lafler, Mrs. Harry; Lancaster, C. E.; Larisey, Jack; Lauder, Harry; Lee, Dr. C.; Lee, Capt. Harry, A. R. C.; Lee, Dr. William R.; Lewis, Warburton; "Lonely Jock"; Lovett, Harold S.; McAdams, W. B.; Mac Donald, Tony; Madsen, Sgt. E. E.; Nelson, Frank Lovell; O'Hara, Jack; Parker, G. A.; Parker, Dr. M.; Parrott, Pvt. D. C.; Phillips' Buffington; Phipps, Corbett C.; Pigeon, A. H.; Raphelson, Sampson; Rich, Wagoner, Bob; Rinkenback, Frank; Rundle, Merrill G.; Schmidt, G.; Scott, Pvt. James F.; Swan, George L.; Tripp, Edward N.; Van Tyler, Chester; Von Gelucke, Byron; Ward, Frank B.; Wheeler, S. H.; Williams, W. P.; J. C. H.; L. T. 348; S. 177284; 439; WS-XV.

PLEASE send us your present address. Letters forwarded to you at address given us do not reach you. Address L. B. BARRETTO, care of *Adventure.*

THE TRAIL AHEAD

MID-JANUARY ISSUE

The following eleven stories come to you in the next issue:

THE CITY OF BAAL *A Complete Novelette* *Charles Beadle*
Where time stood still.

THE HEART OF THE RANGE **A Five-Part Story** **Part II** *William Patterson White*
Racey Dawson vs. a combination of professional bad men.

THE LUCK OF "HARDLUCK" KARLUK *A Complete Novelette* *Norman Springer*
A pearl-diver; Chinamen and sea-monsters.

A GOOD SWORD AND A GOOD HORSE *Gordon MacCreagh*
Two adventurers of olden France.

EVERY MAN'S HAND *Captain Dingle*
A sea-captain and a square deal.

THE PLAINS OF PLAGUE *Samuel Alexander White*
A fur-trapper runs the gantlet.

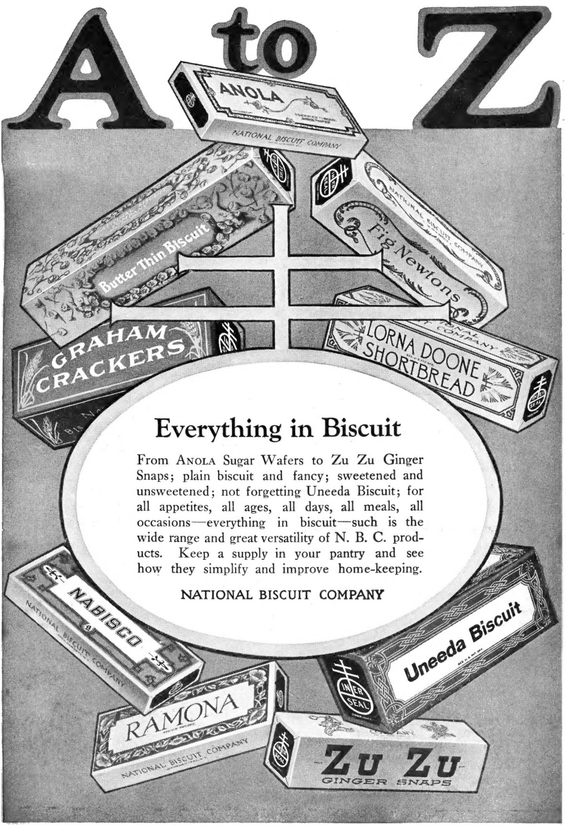
RULE OF THE SEA *Kenneth Howell*
"Man overboard!" and a real mariner does his duty

WHITE EYE *Garrard Harris*
That's *John Barleycorn's* alias in the tropics.

NO WONDER *W. C. Tuttle*
The Piperock of Peace—smoke 'um!

CITIZEN YURUMI* **An "Off-the-Trail" Story** *F. St. Mars*
The ant-eater shows the battlers something in the South American jungle. (See first contents page.)

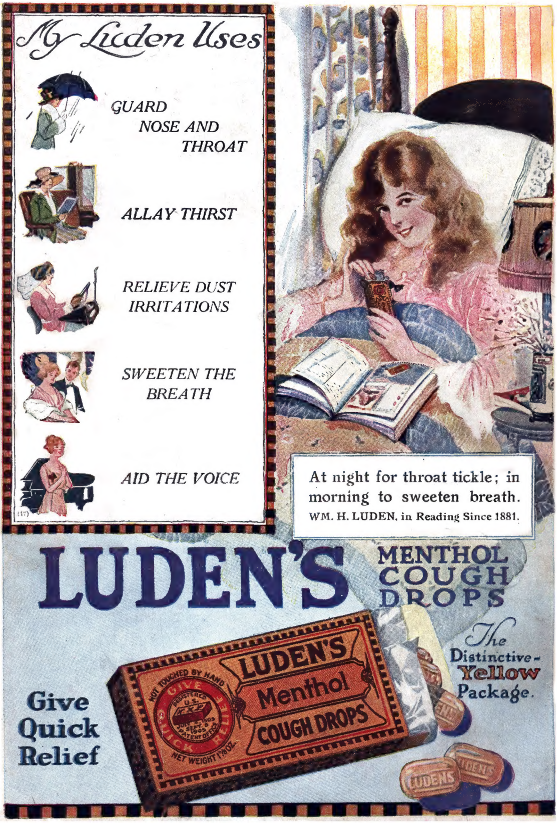
REYES OF ALTAR *E. E. Harriman*
A Mexican bandit makes war on a steer.


A to Z
ANOLA
NATIONAL BISCUIT COMPANY
Butter Thin Biscuit
Fig Newtons
NATIONAL BISCUIT COMPANY
GRAHAM CRACKERS
LORNA DOONE SHORTBREAD
IN ER SEAL
NABISCO
NATIONAL BISCUIT COMPANY
Uneeda Biscuit
RAMONA
NATIONAL BISCUIT COMPANY
Zu Zu
GINGER SNAPS

Everything in Biscuit

From ANOLA Sugar Wafers to Zu Zu Ginger Snaps; plain biscuit and fancy; sweetened and unsweetened; not forgetting Uneeda Biscuit; for all appetites, all ages, all days, all meals, all occasions—everything in biscuit—such is the wide range and great versatility of N. B. C. products. Keep a supply in your pantry and see how they simplify and improve home-keeping.

NATIONAL BISCUIT COMPANY


LUDEN'S
Menthol
COUGH DROPS
NOT TOUCHED BY HAND
GIVE QUICK RELIEF
REGISTERED U.S. PATENT OFFICE
NET WEIGHT 1⅛ OZ.
LUDENS

My Luden Uses

GUARD NOSE AND THROAT

ALLAY THIRST

RELIEVE DUST IRRITATIONS

SWEETEN THE BREATH

AID THE VOICE

(17)

At night for throat tickle; in morning to sweeten breath.
WM. H. LUDEN, in Reading Since 1881.

LUDEN'S MENTHOL COUGH DROPS

The Distinctive-Yellow Package.

Give Quick Relief